

Nina Bunjevac

La Réparation

January 16th – March 1st, 2025
17 rue Martel | 75010 Paris

opening reception with the artist
on Thursday, January 16th starting at 6pm

book signing session
on Saturday, January 18th starting at 3pm



The all black-and-white universe of Nina Bunjevac impresses with its graphic maturity. A virtuoso pointillist, the Canadian author of Serbian origin masters the full range of genres from one book to another, from comics with burlesque accents (« Heartless », « Bezimena » ; Ici-même, 2013 and 2018) to uncompromising autobiographical accounts (« Fatherland » ; Ici-même, 2014 and « La Réparation » ; Martin de Halleux, 2022). Galerie Martel is delighted to present, starting January 16th, 2025, a selection of original artworks from these albums as well as other ongoing projects.

« I have poured my heart and soul into this project,
which is the most personal story I have ever told. »

Nina Bunjevac about « La Réparation »

Hands that touch, extend, brandish, draw, or show, strike or soothe. Singular or multiple eyes that stare, look with indiscretion, kindness, or obscenity. Nina Bunjevac's work is filled with these motifs, which function, more than symbols, as ex-votos, there to designate as much as to heal or repair.

With unparalleled graphic virtuosity, Nina Bunjevac's drawings captivate through a play of scales and zooms that make the reader a voyeur, both a powerless actor and an empathetic detective, faced with a lacunar narrative woven with ellipses. From « Heartless » to her work on divinatory tarot (2023), the author unfolds a universe that owes as much to Robert Crumb, Drew Friedman or Virgil Finlay, while penetrating consciousnesses with a singular lucidity and hyperrealism that also place her within the realms of photography, cinema, and alchemical culture.

The play of gazes organizes a world of secrets in her work, where the frames or panels of comics reveal as much as they hide, censor, or distort what the eye should see. Other plays, of dots and shadows, blacks and grays, resonate with the codes of photography or film noir, from which emerge figures of assassin or lustful women, faceless violent men.

But also arise, as in « La Réparation », the tender gesture of a grandmother, a transmitted photograph, a child's vivacity, or the protection of an animal. What perspective should be taken on a traumatized childhood? How can it be depicted in all its vulnerability while giving it a creative power? It is the artist's hand itself that performs in « La Réparation », a magical or at least performative operation, drawing, alongside the silhouette of the abused child, the different possibilities and allies available to her.

The hand that draws in ink on the blank page invites the eye to shift its gaze. What happens if, as in « Bezimena », the reader adopts the external point of view of the violent character, the aggressor? Like Charles Laughton's camera in « The Night of the Hunter », Nina Bunjevac's frames and silhouettes draw a shadow theater populated by innocent children, made prisoners by the hands of irresponsible adults. The fantastic mingles with the familiar, the marvelous with a form of uncanny strangeness, seeming to translate into dreams or rebuses the memory, which turns into a succession of panels, eyes, hands, locks always inviting us to guess or penetrate what is hidden « behind ».

To the fantasy of innocence forever lost responds the creative power of drawing that saves. In a sublime *mise en abyme* where they write their own story, the hands open a new cosmos or beginning, an iris or a developing planet. Between the secret, the manifesto, and the revealed, they organize a new narrative made of fantasies and projections, celebrating the power of creation.

Far from an esotericism reserved for initiates, Nina Bunjevac's tarot drawings and alchemical images must be read in light of this existential, salvific, and generous relationship to art: « These cards are an invitation to imagination and interiority. My most sincere wish is to sow the desire for introspection in the soul of my readers », she writes about the « Major Arcana of Tarot » (Gallimard, 2023). Bunjevac's pointillism itself constitutes a magical operation, according to the terms she uses to describe this technique: « It remains relatively rare in this medium because it takes more time than line drawing. But I find there is something magical in these little dots: they create an in-between space between light (the white of the paper) and the absence of light (the black ink). »

The biblical narrative itself generously offers itself to the reader or viewer in « The City of David » (2023), the few images speaking for themselves and asking only to be felt: who is this woman covering herself with a veil, advancing through the streets of Jerusalem? Who is this man waiting for her under the moon, in the shadow of a tree?

The magic of Bunjevac's tiny dots, between light and absence of light, suffices to make them speak, in the silence of a night on the Mount of Olives.

Marguerite Demoëte

Press inquiries : Galerie Martel +33 (0)6 10 19 30 02, contact@galeriemartel.fr