

## Éric Lambé

19M<sup>2</sup> | ANTIPODES

December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025  
Chaussée d'Ixelles 337 | 1050 Brussels

opening reception with the artist  
on Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup>  
starting at 11am

book signing session  
on Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup>  
starting at 3pm



**To immerse oneself in the world of Éric Lambé is to embark on a most singular graphic and narrative journey. The Belgian artist, who explores different drawing techniques, shapes a work filled with abundant scenes, teeming with intriguing characters. Galerie Martel BXL is delighted to present, starting December 14<sup>th</sup>, a selection of original artworks from his creations “19m<sup>2</sup>” (Sigaretten, 2024) and “Antipodes” (Casterman, 2024).**

*“Why? is not a serious question.”  
René Magritte*

The interior. The exterior. The threshold. For about thirty years, Éric Lambé’s spatial poetics have been structured around these three points of reference, which he populates with both heavy and light elements, fragmented, squared-off, redundant figures, ultimately permanent ones. In these fully open landscapes — open to surprise, to smiles, to unease — the eye infiltrates, ready to escape, ready to lose itself.

Éric Lambé’s spaces could be places of memory, commonplaces. Swarms of personal markers (here, childhood games; there, games of love), sensory ones (eyes, hands, and ears everywhere), and referential ones (ever-present visual quotations drawn from the general history of art or his own intimate artistic history).

They could be those landscapes traversed a thousand times in reality and in dreams. One walks through them confidently, as if within a familiar land. Floors, walls, tables, chairs, beds, paintings, lamps, pets, smoke, nests, hats, birds, trees, tears, drops, signs, cars, etc. The atmosphere is familiar; the story seems known. As for colors, they are primary or charcoal: they are primal, the first to be retained in the simultaneous unfolding of the eye and mind. In each of the artist’s works, the ordinary is laid bare. It’s an ordinary of the street or a small 19m<sup>2</sup> space, an ordinary contained within these corners we inhabit and then leave.

It's more or less the ordinary already depicted in Éric Lambé's comics, from "Les Jours ouvrables" (Amok, 1997) to "Antipodes" (with David B., Casterman, 2024), via his many collaborations, particularly with Philippe de Pierpont ("Alberto G", Le Seuil/ Frémok, 2003; "Un voyage", Futuropolis, 2008; "Paysage après la bataille", Frémok/ Actes Sud BD, Fauve d'or at the Angoulême International Comics Festival in 2017, etc.), and through the intense interweaving that makes up "Le Fils du roi" (Frémok, 2012). Each time, with humor or melancholy, what is shown is made of fragments left open to countless fables – or farces? – of the mind.

The ordinary also knows how to captivate. For the artist's spaces draw from surrealism, molding the strange within the familiar. Like Robert Desnos, Éric Lambé "lies to multiple consciences" and lets images drift – toward dreams, perhaps, and more accurately toward all that is not mere imitation. Imitation, doomed to weaken reality, is a point of resistance for surrealists: they keep one eye closed, turned inward, and the other open, fixed on the reality of the world (according to Max Ernst's formula). Thus, they make the isolation of beings and objects a leitmotif and anaphora a key element of their poetic art.

But for Éric Lambé, there is no magic beyond reality. As proof, Ceci est une pipe ("This is a pipe") sounds the end of surrealism. Certainly, deceit and artifice remain, but dreams, now daily and no less imposing, unfold differently. Here, the paintings are full and empty of shadowed bodies and bodies of shadows, of still lifes and lives of objects. Familiar motifs form unique pairings while others are sketched or hidden behind angles or curves. In this setting, imagination has taken its place – and reigns supreme.

Thus, a bust suffices to make a body. A leaf, even dead, suffices to make a tree, even a stump; a hand suffices to make both gesture and imprint. "No entry" signs do not prevent any hand from reaching out or any shoe from passing. The street welcomes a multitude of possibilities, masks and cartoonish faces, wealth and poverty, fronts and backs. It's a theater of free spotlights illuminating and casting shadows on this or that part of the setting, carefully selecting the plans, formats, angles, textures, and exposure times. And one ventures into it; there is a thread to follow. A primary line guiding all the others: the floor's grain, the circles of mineral touched by water, the curve of a breast, the addition of ink lines on acrylic, untied laces, arched spines, a fishing line, an unplugged lamp cord, the slit of a woman, a mourner's tear, and the leash of an indispensable dog, long and infinite.

There is a stem, which Éric Lambé, artist-botanist, pulls from the earth by its root.

If we follow it...

**Cathia Engelbach**

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