

ICINORI

LE JARDIN

April 18th — May 30th, 2026
Chaussée d'Ixelles 337 | 1050 Bruxelles

Opening in the presence of the artists
Saturday, April 18th from 3pm to 8pm

Signing session
Saturday, April 18th at 3pm



For their second exhibition with Galerie Martel, and their first in Belgium, Icinori presents *Le Jardin*, a group of previously unseen drawings marking a decisive stage in the trajectory of the duo formed by Mayumi Otero and Raphaël Urwiller.

Since *Travel Book Seoul*, presented at the gallery in Paris in 2020, their work has shifted, refined, and expanded, without ever renouncing what constitutes its foundation: a profound taste for open-ended narrative, mental landscapes, and the pleasure of proposing images that are strange and surprising.

Le Jardin is neither a decorative motif nor a domesticated space. It is a paradoxical place, both wild and theoretically controlled, conducive to the emergence of fragmentary narratives and suspended scenes—sometimes unsettling, often dreamlike. Icinori's gardens have nothing of Versailles about them: they are slightly lost architectures, real or imagined houses, factories overrun by vegetation, jungles where nature seems to have reclaimed its rights. Places one believes to recognize without ever fully understanding them, situated somewhere between East Asia—Japan, Korea, Taiwan—and a dream space, at that uncertain hour between day and night.

Their palette, immediately recognizable—pink, blue, green, orange—now opens onto new equilibria. With the arrival of new tonalities, notably grey and violet, whites gain amplitude and allow the eye to circulate, while perspectives recede—sometimes accurate, sometimes deliberately distorted—within a diffuse lineage linking Japanese prints, the Quattrocento, and certain painters of reverie such as Gauguin or Peter Doig. Nothing is fixed: the viewer is invited to construct their own narrative, to inhabit the images, to lose themselves within them.

At the intersection of illustration, comics, and painting, Icinori also constructs for this exhibition a singular territory populated by ambiguous figures—neither entirely human nor entirely animal—“wild men” emerging from forest or mountain, as though they had not yet returned from nature. The viewer is invited to project their own narrative onto it, to recompose stories from visual clues and atmospheres.

Running beneath the surface, *Le Jardin* extends one of the duo's recurring themes: a form of idealization of craftsmanship, not as nostalgia but as resistance. It is largely for this reason that they continue, at all costs, to self-publish—to the great delight of those who collect their work. At a time when images are produced and consumed at unprecedented speed, Icinori asserts the long duration of drawing, the attention paid to materials, to errors, to accidents—a reflection also nourished by their interest in the “bugs” of artificial intelligence, observed without ever resorting to it. Selected for the Art Faber section of the upcoming Drawing Now Art Fair, Mayumi Otero and Raphaël Urwiller affirm with *Le Jardin* a body of work that has reached maturity—deeply contemporary, and offering each viewer the freedom to invent their own journey.

Frédéric Bosser

Editor-in-chief of Les Arts Dessinés

Biography

One name to allow every audacity.

Behind the name Icinori stand two artists: Mayumi Otero and Raphaël Urwiller. United in life as in work, they belong to the same generation—that of the early 1980s. There is no need to search in this

signature for a contraction of their surnames or a family reference: Icinori is an entirely invented name. It was born when, as students at the Arts Décoratifs in Strasbourg, they began publishing their own books. Raphaël Urwiller admits, not without irony, that he kept it because it referred to nothing—not even on Google, including in Slovak. A blank name, then, with which to explore all territories together and without having to justify themselves. By their own admission, working as a duo is not necessarily faster, since every decision—especially when it concerns images intended to be exhibited in a gallery—must be made jointly.

Livres jeunesse *sélection*

2014 : *Issun Bôshi* : premier livre jeunesse signé Icinori. Chez Actes Sud Jeunesse.

Ce livre reçoit le prix Jeunesse – Bologna Ragazzi

2014 : *Elle tourne comme ça* aux Fourmis Rouges

2018 : *Et puis* chez Albin Michel Jeunesse

2019 : *Séoul Travel Book* chez Vuitton

2022 : *Abécédaire de la beauté*, chez B42

2023 : *Merci* aux éditions La Partie

2024 : *Amie* aux éditions La Partie

Livres d'artistes *sélection*

Déluge, 2017

Carrière, 2019

Relations Presse : Sylvie Chabroux | +33 6 64 25 48 42, sylvie@chabroux.com

MARTEL PARIS | 17 rue Martel, 75010 Paris, France | +33 1 42 46 35 09

MARTEL BXL | Chaussée d'Ixelles 337, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgique | +32 2 721 79 57

contact@galeriemartel.fr | www.galeriemartel.com | mar - sam 14h30 - 19h



ICINORI, *L'archère*, 2025, 65 x 102 cm, encre et gouache sur papier ©ICINORI / courtesy Galerie Martel



ICINORI, *Homme sauvage*, 2025, 46x61 cm, encre et gouache sur papier ©ICINORI / courtesy Galerie Martel



ICINORI, *Homme sauvage*, 2025, 46x61 cm, encre et gouache sur papier ©ICINORI /
courtesy Galerie Martel



ICINORI, *La maison aux chiens*, 2025, 46x61 cm, encre et gouache sur papier ©ICINORI /
courtesy Galerie Martel