

# Anouk Goulet

Short Urban Fables

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**F**rogs have leaped into Anouk Goulet's life quite suddenly and unexpectedly. Although they sprang from her imagination, it appears the little batrachians had been lodged in a corner of her heart for a very long time. Diving into her memories, Anouk indeed remembers that her mother had displayed three frog figures of different sizes on a kitchen shelf and that as a child she would playfully endow them with different personalities. In hindsight, these amphibious creatures came to represent the three sisters of her family unit, as well as becoming the favoured theme that would eventually garner her some acclaim.

Much as she had played in her youth, today she uses paint and brushes to give life to the little animals, rearing them in fable inspired human postures and situations. But don't search for a moral in this fairytale! The main goal here is first and foremost to induce pleasure: the simple pleasure of living without yielding to conventions. Hence, the high degree of candour emanating from Anouk Goulet's imagery, as the artist has never lost her capacity for wonderment. With her blond impish look, it's easy to imagine the fantasy that inhabits her and feeds her humour. It takes very little to make her smile. She often takes an ordinary context and easily topples it over into an amusing situation.

Her somewhat naive compositions propose a universe where all seriousness can be left behind to rediscover the free-

dom of youth. Making people happy is in fact one of her artistic goals, and what better way to do it than through comedy? "My belief is that people need joy in their life to counterbalance the cynicism of our modern world," philosophically adds the painter. Certainly not a new discourse, but one that remains true! And confirmation comes from her success: in November, a sad and gloomy month, she sold the most paintings of all the artists in her gallery.

Last February 12<sup>th</sup>, Anouk Goulet held her first vernissage at the Balcon d'Art gallery in Saint-Lambert. The gallery owners had recently discovered her as an artist when she participated in the 'Salon des arts visuels' of Brossard where she won a 1st prize and was invited to exhibit her works in the prestigious location. Simultaneously excited and anxious at the idea of finally having an opportunity to meet her public, she happily was the recipient of quantity of smiles and positive comments, which further fuelled her creative drive.

Being a great admirer of painter Claude Th  berge, she couldn't believe that her own paintings were displayed on walls next to his, when not so long ago she couldn't have ever imagined being able to live through her art. It goes without saying that in her small Gasp  sie village of Saint-Alphonse, prospects for a professional artist were rather slight, in contrast with the vastness of the landscape. Like many others, she rather directed her studies towards presentation design before embarking on the path towards her ultimate destination. The realization of numerous theatre and cinema decors, during two and a half years, was an experience through which she was able to express her creativity. She will also create and sell hand-painted wood jewellery pieces during a four years period, but managing a small business becomes too consuming for her, and meant she had to set her passion for painting on the back burner.

Aside from her engaging and likeable batrachians, that she studies in depth so as to adequately depict their inherent characteristics, she also paints daisies – a little, a lot, passionately – maybe because they so easily lend themselves to a game filled with promise. Goulet's paintings illustrate

slices of life where simplicity meets with her teasing mindset. She keeps a notebook in her pocket into which she scribbles daily happenings she feels could be of use, those that are filled with hilarious potential to yield comical images. Her figurative style is drawn with precision using planes of vivacious colours on a less defined background to add shapes and textures. Since she isn't a fan of deliberate vagueness, all elements of her work are clearly detailed, without any ambiguity.

Lately, Goulet has been exploring a new avenue in proposing darker coloured paintings with a retro feel inspired by advertising posters of the 1950s. These latter pieces seem to somewhat break with the whole, although her star subjects still take on her signature attitudes and playful comportments. The female elements of her favourite species are here depicted as bombshells of the period, with sensuous curves, overgrown eyelashes, hungry mouths and crimson nails. A faunal version of the feminine stereotype that appears to be winking at today's spectator who cannot but welcome it with gaiety and wide smiling lips.

Should this new theme development be well received, Anouk Goulet plans to take it to new depths, mixing her strand of craziness with a more dated expressiveness. Now that she has officially become a professional artist, she can attempt to realize, in parallel, another one of her dreams. She's been working for sometime now to the restoration of a rustic chalet she inherited from her grandfather, where she plans to set up a luminous studio which would enable her to divide her time between country in summer and city in winter. Her charming amphibians have decidedly already helped her jump to great heights, perhaps, she hardly dares to wish, will they one day help her swim across the ocean. **I**

Lisanne LeTallier

