

Chloé Bocquet is an artist-engraver, an architect in paper, who makes dwellings where no one dwells - except in dreams. When she reflects with her artist's eye on the highways and byways of the world they reflect back their protuberances, their gables and beams, hidden facets and bright facades, their ridges and planes completing and complimenting each other. And from this network of lines a new edifice arises. Chloé Bocquet contemplates where you and I hardly afford a passing glance. A door, a window, a path, an all-too familiar interior .. she seeks out their patterns with a new eye and lifts them up and out and down onto the page - revived and revealed.

Chloé Bocquet dreams, hollowing out an architectural space, redefining its lines to create her template. Lifting this clear of its original context, retaining a single striking detail, she scores it deep into her copper or her zinc engraving plate. Only the lone majestic peak of a gable remains, the surrounding town and its population pared clean away. Abstract, pure, geometric, Chloé Bocquet's technique has a mathematical precision. Positive becomes negative, relief becomes incision as the press performs its work of indentation. Gauge and dry point weave back and forth as Chloé Bocquet transforms public spaces, facades or exteriors into her own personal landscape. Thinking they must be entirely her own creations we are surprised as we step outside to encounter them face to face as if for the first time or else returning to places no longer rendered invisible by familiarity.

There's something magic about the art of engraving, something that goes beyond the contrasts inherent in the technique. As the weight of the press bears down on the scored metal plate which in turn bites deep into the paper beneath everything is transformed. Ridges and grooves spring from smoothness, colour from nowhere, presence from absence.

Chloé Bocquet waves her steel-tipped wand and conjures life and form from the bits and bobs of everyday life.

Chloé seizes upon the seemingly insignificant : shapes and forms and counter forms, right angles and curves, perpendiculars and plumbs. But it's the line, ever the line, in its dizzying multiplicity of length and breadth and direction that holds her attention. The line which marks a flight of steps leading the eye up to a landing and up again, finer with each story, the line which dissipates and reassembles to form the texture of a leaf, a mullioned window or the fat groove that takes it from the top, literally, redefining the gable that was at the heart of the engraving.

Lines and outlines, outlines and lines. It was the Maid of Corinth, according to Pliny the Elder in his Natural History, who became the first graphic artist by inscribing on her wall a silhouette of her lover using a handful of wet clay taken from her father's pottery. This rough outline was to be her keepsake of a man leaving for war, a man she may never see again.

But when Chloé Bocquet's traces an outline she defines a place of expectation not of yearning, a space where what has been and might have been take on a graphic new life.

Chloé Bocquet takes her world and ours, drawing them into her magic circle. These drawings are the proof - if ever proof were needed - of Vasari's theory that drawing is the father of the arts (painting, sculpture and architecture which combines the two). Chloé Bocquet seeks out those compositions of lines that compose our world and follows them tirelessly in and out and back again. The loop and the line sketching the loop, both are infinite .

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Translation from French to English, Joanna Hair.