

DAUWENS & BEERNAERT  
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**PRESS TEXT**

Laetitia de Chocqueuse

**EMANTICIPATION**

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**About Emantipation<sup>1</sup>**

Dauwens & Beernaert is delighted to present ‘*Emantipation*’, the second solo exhibition of Laetitia de Chocqueuse (1983, lives and works in Paris and Zürich) at the gallery. The exhibition has the ambitious intention to engage in *Anticipation* (to reflect upon our Future), an Emancipated Future, detached from the limits imposed by contemporaneity.

An ancient book, installed at the gallery operates as a guideline for the multidisciplinary exhibition and the universe articulated by a variety of media, an original edition (1775) of *L’an deux mille quatre cent quarante* (“The Year 2440”) by Louis-Sébastien Mercier. The in-octavo<sup>2</sup> is a 242 years old utopian novel set in the year 2440, which reflects upon the future, society within 423 years. In a small font, on the cover of the book, we can read the following (partial) quote by Leibniz: « *Le temps présent est gros de l’avenir...* » (“The present is pregnant with the future...”). As every present state of a simple substance is naturally a consequence of its preceding state, its present is pregnant with its future. The quote continues as follows (but the second part is not published on the book cover): “...*le futur se pourrait lire dans le passé*”. The future can be read in the past. However, God and the Gods have commended us not to look back, not to return to the past: they transformed Lot in a salt pillar when she looked back, travelling behind her husband from Sodom, and Eurydice was gone forever, when Orpheus lost his faith and turned back to see Eurydice against Hades’ instruction.

Even though the past cannot be reproduced (*Exemples*), it’s in the ancient book that we can read what will happen in the year 2440, it’s in the painted newspaper (*L’Emantipation*), that we can read (in an old fashioned gothic font) what will happen on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2024, it’s on the basis of the *symbola*<sup>3</sup> of *Sabemos de Aristarque* that a future architecture will be constructed. The exhibition translates and visualizes this delicate equilibrium between the past and the future, with the present operating as the uniting factor, the balance between the past and the future. The work “*Le Jour Obscur*” also departs from the delicate relation between the past, the future and the present. “The Dark Day” as it’s become known, took place on May 19, 1780. For no apparent reason, the sun was covered and darkness descended. For the past 237 years historians and scientists have argued over the origins of this strange event. A grim day in the Age of Enlightenment. The chain operates as a *memento mori*: reading and discovering what happened in the past, in order to know what will happen in the future. In the future, we will all become part of the past. From this movement arises a new geometry: the past retraced, the future projected: the present is nothing more than the space for conception. This new space, this new geometry is materialized in *Sabemos de Aristarque*. The title of the work, the reversal of *Aristarque de Samos*, creates a new dimension. Indeed, what do we know (*Sabemos* means “do we know” in Spanish) about Aristarque de Samos? Very little or nothing. Even though he was the first astronomer who presented the first model that placed the Sun at the

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<sup>1</sup> This text is based on an essay by Georges Duntel, which can be found [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> A size of book page that results from folding each printed sheet into eight leaves

<sup>3</sup> *Symbola* are different parts of a whole (e.g. pottery) that are uncomplete until they are reunited. They were used in Ancient Greece to conclude contracts and operate as a sign of recognition.

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centre of the universe with the Earth revolving around it, the heliocentric theory is generally attributed to Copernicus, who revived this concept 1700 years after Artisanarque de Samos. We are challenged to question the past, and its historical (and selective) interpretation. A geometrical construction arises from this redefined history, a spatial representation of time. Twelve ancient Greek *symbola* are used as landmarks of the particle accelerator of CERN. When connected, the 12 symbola form a dodecagon. Each corner of the dodecagon corresponds with a place (in France or Suisse) that is pictured on 12 canvases. The dodecagon figures on each canvas, and the corresponding Symbolon is indicated on the relevant corner of the dodecagon. Even though the works are inherently connected to their location, they are also intrinsically connected to each other: they shape a temporal and spatial chain. As the pictures will travel, the dodecagon will be deformed, and give rise to a new geometry, a constellation in permanent movement, which will be monitored via a website. In that way Sabemos de Aristarque operates in three parallel dimensions: the location of the Symbola (the points / corners of the dodecagon), the canvases that will be travelling, and finally the website, the memory of the origin of the works, and their movements.

## II. About Laetitia de Chocqueuse

Laetitia de Chocqueuse (°1983) lives and works in Paris and Zürich. She studied at Les Arts Décoratifs in Paris, La Cambre in Brussels and Les Beaux-Arts in Paris.

Through a range of drawings, sculptures, paintings and film, the work of Laetitia de Chocqueuse seeks to discover the resonances between events or objects that are in principle unrelated to one another and then to organize them in way that suggests a delicate and unstable scenography.

By playing with repetition, illusion, balance and fragility, Laetitia de Chocqueuse's works depict the subjectivity of our relationship to the Real, and more particularly to time, while questioning the very construction of chronology itself.

Occasionally borrowing ideas or styles from bygone eras (such as the Ars Memoria or 18th century literature), her work attempts to elongate the reach of the temporalities peculiar to each one of these elements, to reactivate certain thought processes and to evoke, ever so slightly, time's irreversibility.

Through frequent attempts to broaden perception and space (the perception one has of space and the space of our perception), Laetitia de Chocqueuse's works suggest a possible science fiction in which the only thing that remains to be conquered is not the domain of horizontality (territories) but verticality (our relationship to time).