
Kaye Donachie
FRAC ÎLE-DE-FRANCE | LE PLATEAU
22 rue des Alouettes
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Glasgow-born, London-based painter Kaye Donachie threads her work with a pantheon of real and fictional heroines, from German Expressionist poetess Henriette Hardenberg to Hari, a character from Andrei Tarkovsky’s 1972 film Solaris. Her female protagonists are executed in a crepuscular palette, sometimes disrupted by bright gashes of color. Although human figuration is central, the compositions openly play with interiority—their dreamlike superpositions and fades feel cinematic, as if constructed from layers of negatives. The paintings are vividly gestural but contemplative, intimate.

Historical works by iconic artists such as Claude Cahun and Lee Miller are paired with the paintings. Miller’s photograph Model with Lightbulb, ca. 1943, introduces the leitmotif of mutable perception in relation to female subjects and form early on in the exhibition. Throughout, the vintage images converse fluidly with Donachie’s contemporary ones; the resonances are often forthright and engaging. The seductive curves of a female silhouette, examined in the black-and-white print of Florence Henri’s Nu – Femme au Jacinthes (Nude – Woman with Hyacinths), 1930, echo Donachie’s paintings of a taut torso in muddied pale blues (In the Last Hours, 2015) and an upright nude in lilac purple (Every Beginning Is Only a Sequel, 2009). Similarly, Donachie’s series of cyanotypes, “Untitled,” 2015, featuring leaves or hands, privileges the same subjects as the mixed-media works by Josette Exandler and Henri’s still-life photographs. Manifest within Donachie’s work and strengthened by dint of juxtaposition, the exhibition exalts women as subjects, creators, and manifold selves.

— Sarah Moroz