

ALMINE RECH

Edgar Plans

Once Upon a Time the French Literature

Jun 3 — 26, 2021 | Paris, Turenne (Front Space)

Almine Rech presents *Once Upon a Time the French Literature*, a project by Edgar Plans, on view in the Front Space in Paris.

Fascinated with graffiti, urban art, and comic books from an early age, Edgar Plans soon surrounded himself with pencils, pens, brushes, and colors and focused on painting and drawing. When he became an artist, he created an unusual world, populated with figures that are often close to the famous Japanese *kawaii* aesthetic, which encompasses everything that is cute, childlike, and very colorful, such as the Pokémon Pikachu, certain manga, and rainbow unicorns.

The figures invented by Edgar Plans in his creations are a part of the aesthetic of the adorable and the cult for the purposefully naïve or expressions of shyness. Concurrently, at Almine Rech Shanghai, the artist is showing several pieces in the group exhibition *Kawaii*, alongside artists Sun Yitian and Szabolcs Bozó.

However, in his lively, stimulating, and colorful work, Edgar Plans plunges his masked heroes with their rounded shapes and innocent expressions into raw worlds. This can be seen in *Animal Heroes*, one of his best-known series. In addition to their naïve craftsmanship, they make up a gallery of portraits whose joyful irony also serves to bring to light racial violence or violence against sexual minorities.

The eight new works Edgar Plans has produced for this exhibition pay homage to French literature and the power of books on the imagination. The Spanish artist celebrates the French writers who inspired his art, decking them out in superhero costumes, in a way that summons both innocence and an almost religious adoration.

Edgar Plans was born in Madrid in 1977. His father, a journalist and writer of fantasy, horror, and science fiction, urged him to read great books while encouraging his desire to become an artist. Plans developed an independent mind that embraces creative freedom, shunning conventionality and well-worn themes.

With a background of deep black and with minimal settings, this French literary family takes shape: Alexandre Dumas looks at his pen as if it were a mirror, Baudelaire holds a red flower before his eyes, and Perrault offers Cinderella's slipper to an admiring Puss-in-Boots who sports high-tops, while Saint-Exupéry's Little Prince and a victorious Captain Nemo, atop a multi-colored mountain with thick daubs of paint, complete this joyous hall of fame. The same creative effervescence and embodied inspiration burst forth from *The Power of Books*, a large painting where a small group of writers, perched on a balancing structure, flood a street's walls with graffiti, surrounded by typewriters, manuscripts, and piles of books. An encounter with childhood, whimsy, and acclaim for art could not find a better setting than in these new works by Edgar Plans.

- Charles Barachon, art critic and writer