

# Lucile Desamory | My People (Heaps and Piles)

Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS

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*Passé Remordu*, 2020, silk embroidery on canvas, 5 x 3.5m

For Lucile Desamory, what used to be and what will turn out to be are not points of departure and arrival respectively, but stages of an ongoing process of becoming. Things do not exist in a vacuum, they establish kinships with one another in juxtapositions and assemblages based on their materialities, likeness, and affinities. In doing so, they become something distinct, what the artist calls a **pile**; yet the pile is not brand-new, for if you look closely the pile is formed by **heaps**, alike single things that have merged into one. In Lucile Desamory's words:

*“When used as nouns, heap means a crowd, whereas pile means a mass of things heaped together. When used as verbs, heap means to pile in a heap, whereas pile means to lay or throw into a pile or heap. Heap is also adverb with the meaning: very.*

*I look at piles and heaps.*

*A pile is an arrangement of things that often look alike. It is a soft arrangement prone to moves and transformations.*

*Heaps and piles are systems of order, not only used by humans but also by animals.*

*The works in this exhibition play around a universal idea of structures and sorting. They do so by observing soft structures in a soft way.”*

Lucile Desamory observes and arranges phenomena in transition, inviting us to look at the world in its continuous state of construction and deconstruction. Desamory's piles are made of objects and fabrics that have already lived a life before being assembled. They are traces of multiple pasts moulded together. Contrary to the polish and neatness that characterise industrial production, her piles do not shy away from the rawness and wear of their constituting elements. Flowing between order and disorder, her work is testimony to the beautiful intricacies of the material world and an encouragement to see beyond superficial layers and embrace the living quality of things.

What is it that we are seeing? Are those things what we think they are? Are they there, or are they a visual illusion? Is that a piece of cloth or a ghostly presence? These questions lie in the core of this show and reflect Lucile Desamory's interest in the transitory state of materials and their portrayal in the process of becoming something else. Despite the impression that the pile forms a whole, the heaps that shape it are in in-between states. In 'Besondere Perücken' a pile of wigs from the costume department of the Leipzig Opera House has been assembled into a pliable wholeness of colours, shapes, and textures; in 'Heap', feathers convene like lush foliage. Just like Desamory's piles are rich in material approaches – embroidery, collage, assemblage – they also share a softness that accentuates their transient nature. 'Passé Remordu' acts as a soft curtain wall, both an entrance and an exit to Desamory's material world, in which its soft dwellers concur and relate to one another in a playful *conciliabule*.

My People draws on a universal discourse of structures and sorting in amalgamations of materialities. Following her multifaceted practice, Lucile Desamory presents a selection of sculptures, drawings, photographs, and embroidery that seek to visualize the many layers in objects and challenge their understanding as inanimate entities. What lies beneath the surface? What is it that we are seeing beyond its façade? In the pile we might find hints of preceding futurities.

Lucile Desamory was born in Belgium and is based in Berlin. She uses painting, drawing, embroidery, collage, photography, film, and her voice. She combines these techniques into larger webs such as installations, films, radio plays and live performances. Her films have been shown at the Berlin Film Festival, the International Film Festival Rotterdam, Anthology Film Archive NYC, Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain and has exhibited at Wiels, Kunstraum Düsseldorf and Tate Modern among others.

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