

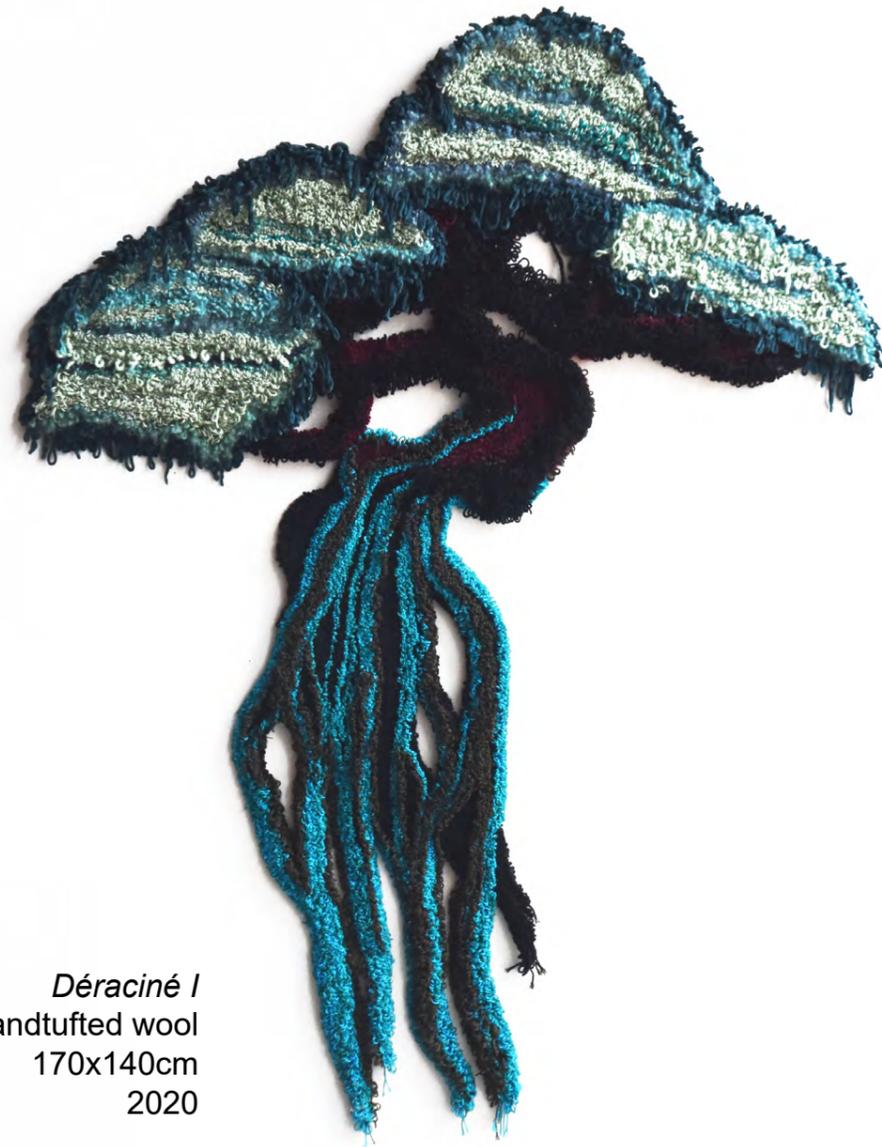


CLAUDE COMO

Tous les chemins ne mènent pas à Rome
Handtufted wool
350x200cm
2020

Claude Como
The living at heart

Since the 1980s, Claude Como (born in 1964, lives and works in Marseille) has used oil paint, ceramics, resin, charcoal and wool to fathom her own history. She also experiments with her complex relationship to the realities of the world, where the living finds a central place.



Déraciné I
 Handtufted wool
 170x140cm
 2020

Abidjan

Claude Como grew up in Ivory Coast. Her father, a chemist, moved to Abidjan the year she was born. She lived there until she was sixteen, and still has a visceral attachment to a country where she lived freely, in a collective way, close to the living. Since her difficult departure, Claude Como thinks of herself as a floating body, neither really here nor there. An in-between body that addresses the questions of home, wandering, roots and belonging.

She began drawing at the age of five. Every Saturday, in front of a blackboard on an easel, she “does her job”. She would imagine a ballet: its staging, its characters, the details of the costumes. The following Saturday, she would erase the blackboard and recreate new situations according to very precise rules. In the end, this is what the artist has continued to do since the 1980s. She creates new worlds out of images gathered from her memories, her sensations, but also from the art history she continues to explore. The figuration of these worlds goes through the mastering of different techniques for the realization of long term series. She assumes that she knows nothing so that each work becomes an adventure in itself. This thinking by series allows her to investigate deeply into her subjects, dedicating to them all the time that is required : “My artistic approach is part of a permanent challenge, that is also a game. I go towards that which I do not know how to do. Nothing is ever taken for granted.” Each series involves a technical reset, but also a visual one, as the artist immerses himself in a new area of the living. The result is a plural writing that adapts to the subjects to which she devotes herself fully.

She says that she has no style, that she is not programmed to write in a unique manner. “I don’t have a single way of doing things. I follow my intuitions even if I am not recognized. It is in the long run that my work unfolds.

Supernature
 View of the exhibition
 Gallery Le Cabinet d’Ulysse
 Marseille 2021



Déraciné XVIII
 Handtufted wool
 190x130cm
 2023

Exiting the Anthropocene

Since 2015, Claude Como is gradually moving away from an anthropocentric representation in favor of a physical and mental dive into the heart of the living. Human figures hybridize with vegetal elements or fade away into the abyss and cataclysms, and animal figures like the jellyfish – a majestic floating body. “I like the movements of the living: a volcanic eruption, a fire, a hurricane. It manifests itself violently as if it were breathing very hard, it overwhelms and impresses me.” The Gaia series (2018) brings together terrestrials (animals, plants and other living organisms) to decenter the place of the human and think more deeply about the interdependencies that exist between beings and their environments. Another series is dedicated to animals. Since her childhood, the artist has had an intense relationship with them. “When I was little, my friend was an otter.” She represents in particular the strangeness of their bodies. “They are clusters of feathers and hair, I want to treat the material, the sensuality of bodies.” Like a scientific observer, Claude Como decomposes, radiographs, fragments, opens or hybridizes animal bodies to reach a dimension as mysterious as it is monstrous.

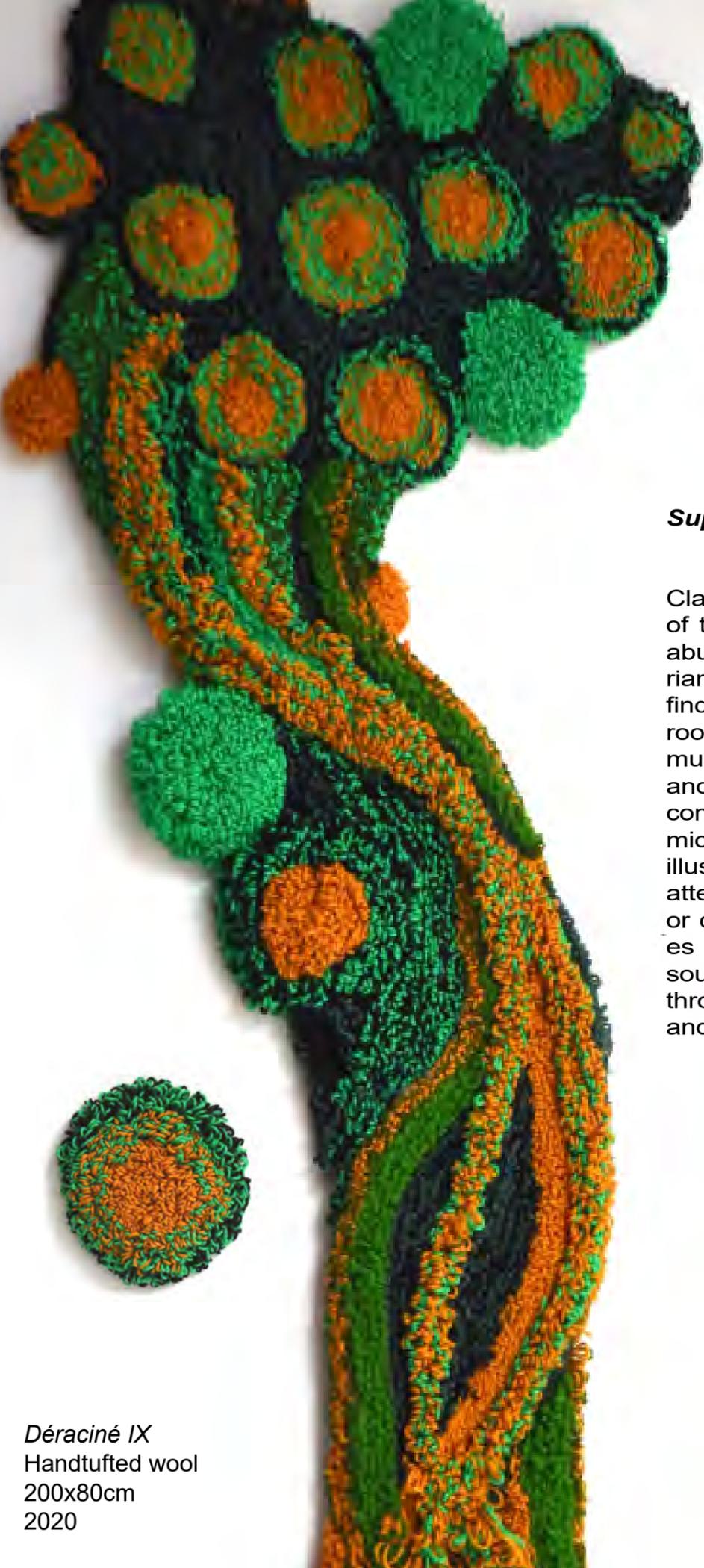
In 2019, we observe the emergence of an unusual technique: tufting. Armed with a tufting gun, traditionally used by craftsmen to make rugs, she projects wool threads to create works that are both supple and monumental. The result is two first works: *J’aurais aimé t’envoler*, a pair of white wings with a three-meter wingspan, and *Tributes to Masters*, an open and suspended animal carcass that reminds us of Rembrandt as well as Soutine or Bacon. These works open a new writing and a new relationship to space.



In the studio 2022



Purple Heart
Handtufted wool
270x140cm
2020



Supernature

Claude Como then begins a series of tufted tapestries that represent abundant vegetal elements, luxuriant micro-organisms. We can find there: seeds, stones, buds, roots, flowers, foliage or even mushrooms, endowed with bright and assertive colors. The motifs come from an image bank where microbial universes and botanical illustrations meet. The artist is an attentive observer of plant, mineral or cellular forms. "Matter influences the form, and vice versa". The source images drift and transform through gestures, technical shifts and fictional necessity.



Full Mellow Yellow
Handtufted wool
220x400cm
2020

Déraciné IX
Handtufted wool
200x80cm
2020



Claude Como expresses a physical and spatial imperative of proliferation. "It is an explosion. I need to experience intense feelings through my work." To make works that reflect a more joyful and vibrant dimension of the living. The most recent works resonate with the ecological thoughts of Bruno Latour, Dénètem Touam Bona, Véronique Mure, Starhawk, Gilles Clément and many others. Since humans globally choose to turn away from the living, Claude Como endeavors to represent it in a disproportionate manner. We are physically taken by the presence of the tufted artworks. The images of the living impose themselves on us. They demand our attention.

About that technical choice, the artist prefers the word *touffeté*, it calls for a greater tactility of the woolly material and the colors. To a greater sensuality also. The tufted tapestries emancipate themselves from the rigid and constraining formats. "I wanted to free myself from the canvas frame, to free the forms." By their flexibility, they extract themselves from the frame to literally colonize the walls and give an organic dimension to the architecture that hosts them. If Claude Como used to tie her forms to the limits of the painting, she now chooses to float, to multiply and to regenerate. Each element is autonomous and has its own title. If the works can be presented separately, it is collectively that they find their plastic power. On the walls, the artist (de)composes infinitely for an immersive and sensitive experience of an extraordinary biocenosis.

Supernature Révolutions 0-500 cm
Révolutions work in progress
Handtufted wool
500x350cm
2021



Sun Seeds
Handtufted wool
400x450cm
2020

Getting rid of “natures mortes”

The choice of tufting places the artist in the history of tapestry. Indeed, since the Middle Ages, works representing the plant and floral world have been woven. From Millefleurs to Verdures, through trees of life and stylized motifs, the approaches evolve over time. The history of tapestry combines symbolic, religious, naturalistic, decorative, figurative or abstract approaches. If she confesses that she “feels very small in front of a world that she is learning to know”, Claude Como likes to explore the history of Western art in order to rework and (de)represent the great classifications or subjects considered traditional: vanity, animal figures, human anatomy, psyche, portrait, landscape, architecture, etc. Representations of the living (the word “nature” is voluntarily excluded, since it constitutes an argument to maintain a binary and mortifying thought between nature and culture) are here generous. Supernature thwarts the question of the “nature morte” – still life or, literally, “dead nature”–, which, if one thinks about it, is a nonsense since the living is an ecosystem in perpetual metamorphosis.

The tufted works contribute to a reactivation and an extension of the history of tapestry. Nothing is fixed, everything is redefinable. The cut-out forms are mutually articulated resulting in tentacular, moving and rhizomic installations – cut-out forms which inhabit, by the way, the whole of the artistic approach of Claude Como, constantly confronting volume and flatness.

With a mixed feeling of wonder and gravity, she presents decontextualized bodies, scenes deprived of horizons, suspended ecosystems. The artist, who has long experienced herself as a marginal being, has built her work around notions such as uprootedness, movement, absence, impermanence, death and possible rebirths. Nourished by a strong autobiographical dimension, her protean work is built in the long run. She thus compares her approach to that of a spider weaving its web. The ramifications between the series generate the embodied narrative of a terrestrial and psychic cosmogony – as intimate as it is collective.

Julie Crenn

Doctor in art history, art critic (AICA) and independent curator



Révolutions, *Velvety Polyporus*
Handtufted wool
120x130
2021



Révolutions, *Carmina Pod*
Handtufted wool
340x230cm
2021



Arrières pensées III
Dry pastel on paper
70x50 cm
2022



Joy division
Handtufted wool
350x200cm
2022



Photo Thomas Gogny

Supernature Révolutions I
Handtufted wool
350x1100cm
View of the exhibition Forest Art Project
Church of Jacobins - Agen Fine Arts Museum



Brisants
Handtufted wool
Height to wall 290 cm and on the floor 150x250cm
2022



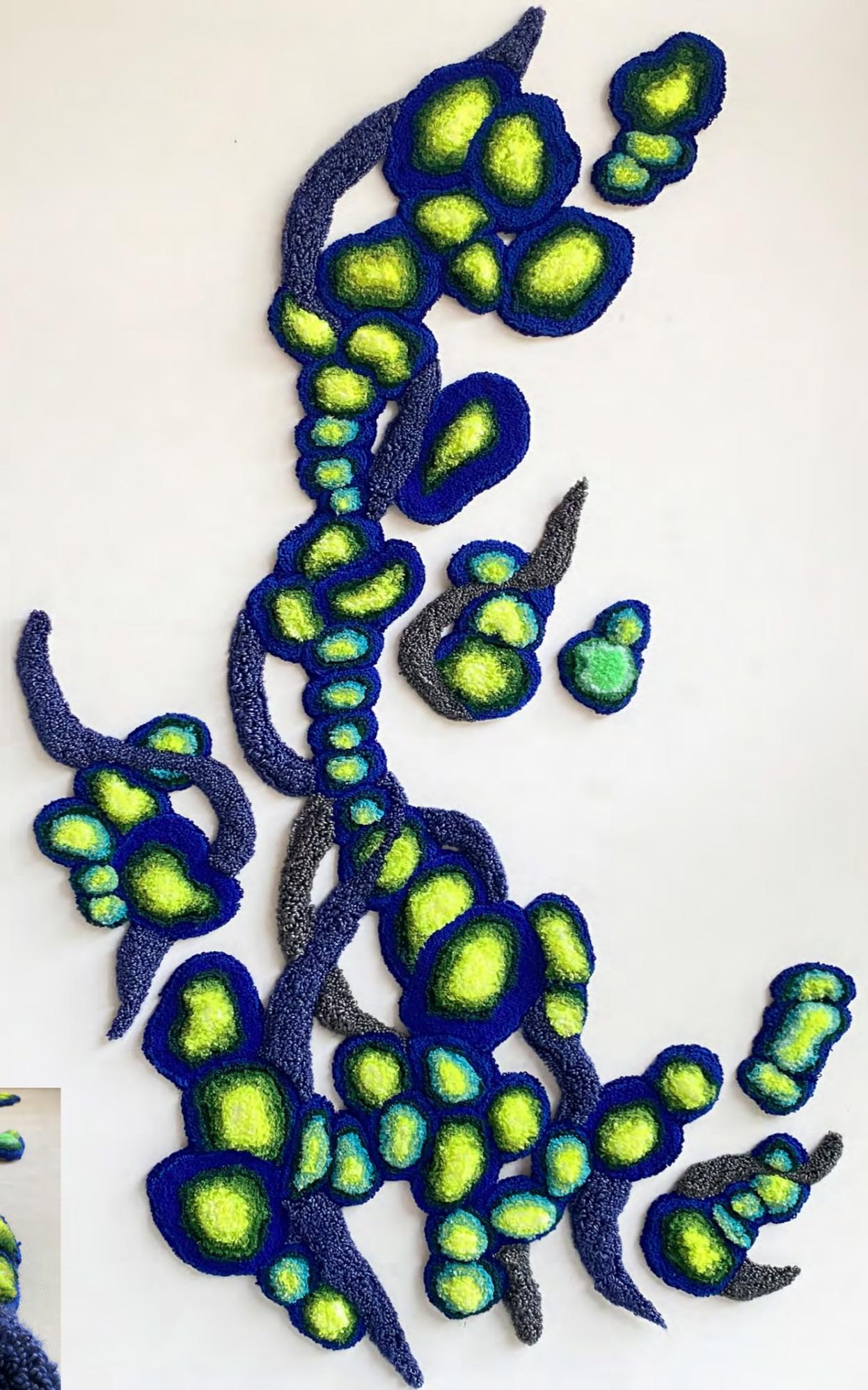
In Vino Veritas
Handtufted wool
480x185cm
2022



Arrières pensées II
Dry pastel on paper
65x50cm
2022



Blue velvet
Handtufted wool
300x110cm
2022





Supernature Révolutions III Project for the Abbey of l'Escaladieu Tarbes

View of the studio

Handtufted wool

350x450cm

2022



Supernature Révolutions III Project for the Contemporary Art Center Ar(t)senal in Dreux
View of the studio
Handtufted wool
350x450cm
View of the studio
2023