



## Close-up on...

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### Willy

Work from photos for a flawless realism, in often blue-tinted colors like an old TV screen, a visual imagination of the media age testifying to our days and to the sometimes forgotten figures of the sex industry, like Lily Saint-Cyr or Monica la Mitraïlle, cold tints to keep our feelings under control and enable the reflexion.

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

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### Exhibitions(s)

[Willy](#), July/September 2009 in Montreal, QC, Canada.

### Videos



[Montreal 2009 exhibition](#)  
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[Exhibition X, Montreal, 2007](#)  
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### Interview with Willy

*What message(s) do you want to express through your work?*

I am an erotic-political painter. As far as I am concerned, a woman who has hairy armpits in a society evening states a political gesture in the sense that she behaves against the moral order. When I paint the hairy armpits of that woman, I state too a political gesture. I maintain, with her, this challenging gesture. By that way, I refuse, we refuse, to give ground to that asepticizing of the bodies that reigns in the West. Having said that, I think I am rather an erotic-political painter than a political-erotic painter. I am an artist before being a militant.

*Tell us about differences between Quebec/ Canada and France on eroticism, decency and taboo notions...*

Actually, when we discuss the erotic art subject, we observe that hypocrisy rules supreme over the two continents... Here, the sex as it is naturally present should not be seen. When I arrived in North America, I have started working on "The origin of the world" (Courbet's painting which depicts a woman with generously opened thighs in close-up). The painting has been censored two times, including in an erotica exhibition! The vulva was judged as indecent just because of its considerable pilosity. I finally shaved it off (I have plucked it, whereas it is very hairy in the original painting) and I have changed the name of the painting: "The Origin of the world" has become "Welcome". Do not forget that North America is the place for definitive hair removal and plastic surgery of labia. Quebec is not exempt from it. Although in France we do not take offence at the view of a hairy pubic tuft, erotic art expansion is not promoted. It is still denied for that art form to gain respectability. This is just another censorship way...

*What attracts you in characters such as Lily Saint-Cyr or Monica la Mitraïlle?*

You have to place those two women in their socio-political context to understand my admiration for them. Lili St-Cyr was an exotic dancer well-known in Montreal in the fifties. During that period which is called here "the big darkness", men and women were bending under the weighty domination of both State and Clergy. In such a context, a woman like Lily St-Cyr was a true revolutionary. What a courage she had to defy religious and political authorities, calling upon her the wrath of clergymen, municipal representatives and housewives! Facing it, the admiration of the men who attended to her stripper shows was indeed a meagre compensation, I believe...

Monica-la-mitraïlle was lucky to be born in a period freed of Clergy's yoke, but her luck stopped there. Where she grew up, even dream was not possible. When you are a young girl playing with doll in the heart of a ghetto full of whores and criminals of every grades, you don't dream like other little girls to marry the charming prince... Rather an armed robbery prince or a drug trafficking captain. From the beginning to the end of her life, Monica had to rely only on herself to find her way, she had to draw in her own strengths to reach her aspirations. And she succeeded: she was a peerless bank hold-up specialist, what is more without having shed a drop of blood! To that extent, she has made a success of her life. And for that, I admire her.

*Which artists inspire you? Who are your masters?*

Jacques Monory, Clovis Trouille, Gerhard Richter, Pierre Molinier...

*What have you gained by being on the internet?*

To my own opinion, the main advantage of the internet is that we find there a space of exchanges and exhibitions of all kinds, and uncensored. For that mere reason, the internet seems to me the invention of the century! But I don't look for models there, nor do I look for exhibition places. Not in a conscious way at least.

*What projects mean a lot to you at the moment?*

The very close opening of a friend's restaurant. He has entrusted me with its decoration (I am also painter and decorator: [Guillaume Dupuis](#)).

Le Loie is going to be a very pleasant restaurant where my paintings will be regularly shown. Located on the René-Lévesque boulevard in Montreal, in front of the Radio-Canada building. Among other things, the painting "La danseuse" will be exhibited for sale for the benefit of Stella (Communautary group for sex workers).

Words gathered in October 2005  
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