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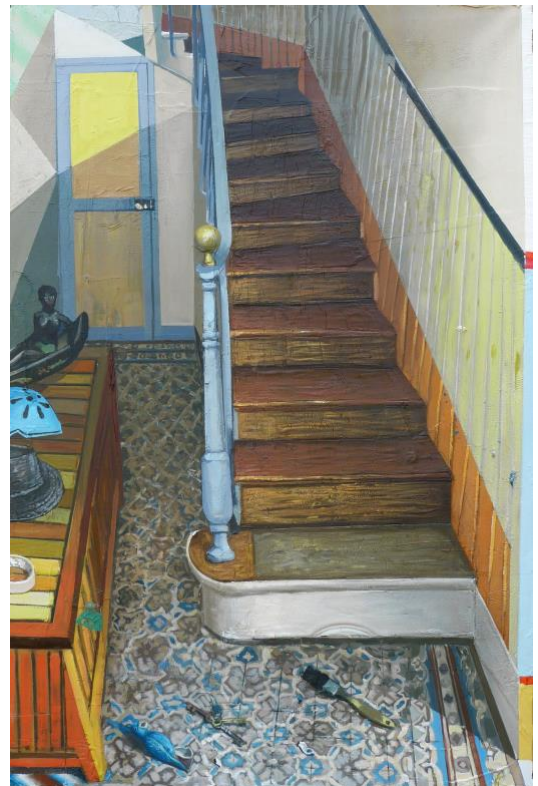
Mathieu Cherkit, Cache-Cache

## An everyday staircase, but staggeringly painted

**Gallery** The French painter Mathieu Cherkit has only a limited interest in realism: his colors are always more intense than normal, and the shadows more radical. Recent work can now be seen at Albada Jelgersma Gallery.

Alienation, that's what it's all about with the French painter Mathieu Cherkit. That just doesn't stand out, because the scenes he paints seem so every day. A vestibule for example, with a wooden staircase and some toys on the floor (*Blue Phoenix*, 2019). A messy corner in the living room, including a nostalgic black-and-white photo and a casually squashed blue bag (*Connexion*, 2019). Or such a badly salloved hall with gray light, full of crates and craft supplies (*Ice and Fire*, 2019).

Moreover, Cherkit always takes his own home as the starting point for his canvases - the fact that he has just moved, and the exhibition at Albada Jelgersma Gallery in Amsterdam showing the first series of paintings made from the new home, is a nice side effect.



Mathieu Cherkit, **Blue Phoenix**, 2019  
oil on canvas, 150 × 100 cm  
Photo: Galerie Albada Jelgersma

But that's not the point. Because the longer you look, the better you see that Cherkit has only limited interest in realism. What makes him an intriguing painter are precisely the deviations - and there are many of them. With Cherkit, the colors are always more intense than normal, and the shadows more radical. But the perspectives on his paintings in particular are sometimes dizzying. Take the aforementioned Blue Phoenix vestibule painting: if you set this against the standards of the classical central perspective, nothing is wrong, the vanishing points shoot in all directions. But as a result, despite the beautiful, French, sun-drenched colors, as a spectator you do get an oppressive feeling - as if a touch of ominousness has been blown through this everyday space. And is that why the blue phoenix is also on the floor?

That is Cherkit's strength, entirely in the spirit of grandmaster David Hockney: it is precisely in his deviations that he manages to evoke atmospheres and feelings that are normally hidden from view, but which you do recognize - and which keep you looking. Cherkit is so strong in this that it is unfortunate that he wants to emphasize his power over the illusion on his new canvases by allowing the paint to bulge over the edges of the canvas in thick slices. Nice for the paintman, but it detracts from Cherkit's suggestive power - such tricks don't need such a talent.