

Gaspar Willmann

b. 1995 (Paris, FR)
Lives and works in Paris

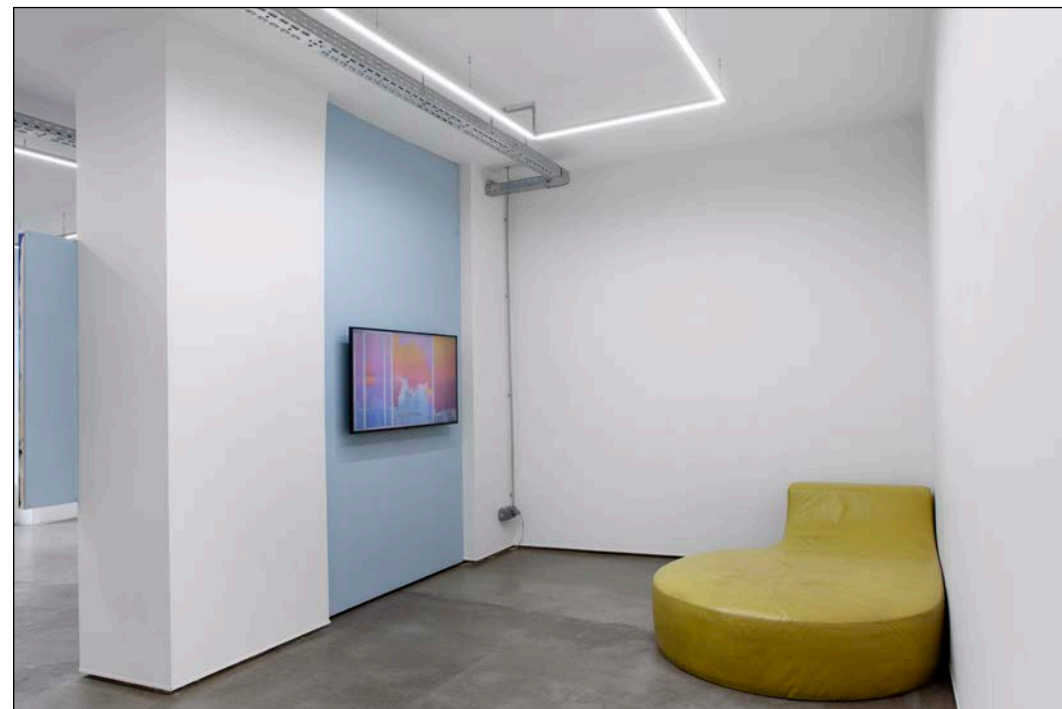


2024 My ligature room in a glass house

'My ligature room in a glasshouse' is the third solo show of Gaspar Willmann at Exo Exo. For the occasion the artist puts together a set of paintings from his JUMAP series as well as a video titled *Glass House* (22'39", 2024).

The film is featured in a semi-partitioned space where a couch with rounded corners welcomes the viewer. It opens up on the life of Bob R. Just like the unfinished Sergueï Eisenstein's movie Gaspar Willmann takes his core idea from, Bob R. lives in a house only made out of transparent walls.

In such a setting, his whole life, in the most intimate corners, is exposed. This jail-like dimension is increased by the contradictory notion of «ligature room», a space of fragility and openness within this world of imprisonment. Through the habits and the banality, *Glass House* is also showing us the narrator's will to escape the crystal clear simulation he lives in, his discrete fight against it through his affects and his need for singularity, even in the most blank and controlled space. This counter-dimension is embodied by the female voice over guiding Bob R. tale. New possibilities of meanings and affects, of resistance and emotions begin to blossom through her ghostly subtext.



Just like Bob R. is stuck in between a false promise of coziness and an uncanny feeling and just like the visitors themselves are being put in a wicked discomfort from the sit-stand bench, the JUMAP series also exists in between two paradigms. These collage-like paintings are made through the overlapping of pictures from online databases and others taken by Gaspar Willmann with his iPhone. From a first and overly polished layer, becoming almost transparent or invisible because of its overconsumption, a second layer seems to emerge, more intimate and opaque. Far from being opposed to one another, these two levels seem to be echoing and revealing a certain proximity. Both modified by Gaspar Willmann through blurring effects, they almost melt into one another. Like glitches hacking the system from the inside, never running away from it, Gaspar Willmann images counteract the strictly onsumerist, productivist and sometimes totalitarian aspect of the pictures they originate from. Thanks to their distortions, these new images are revealing ways of resistance, never erased but always there in the margins.





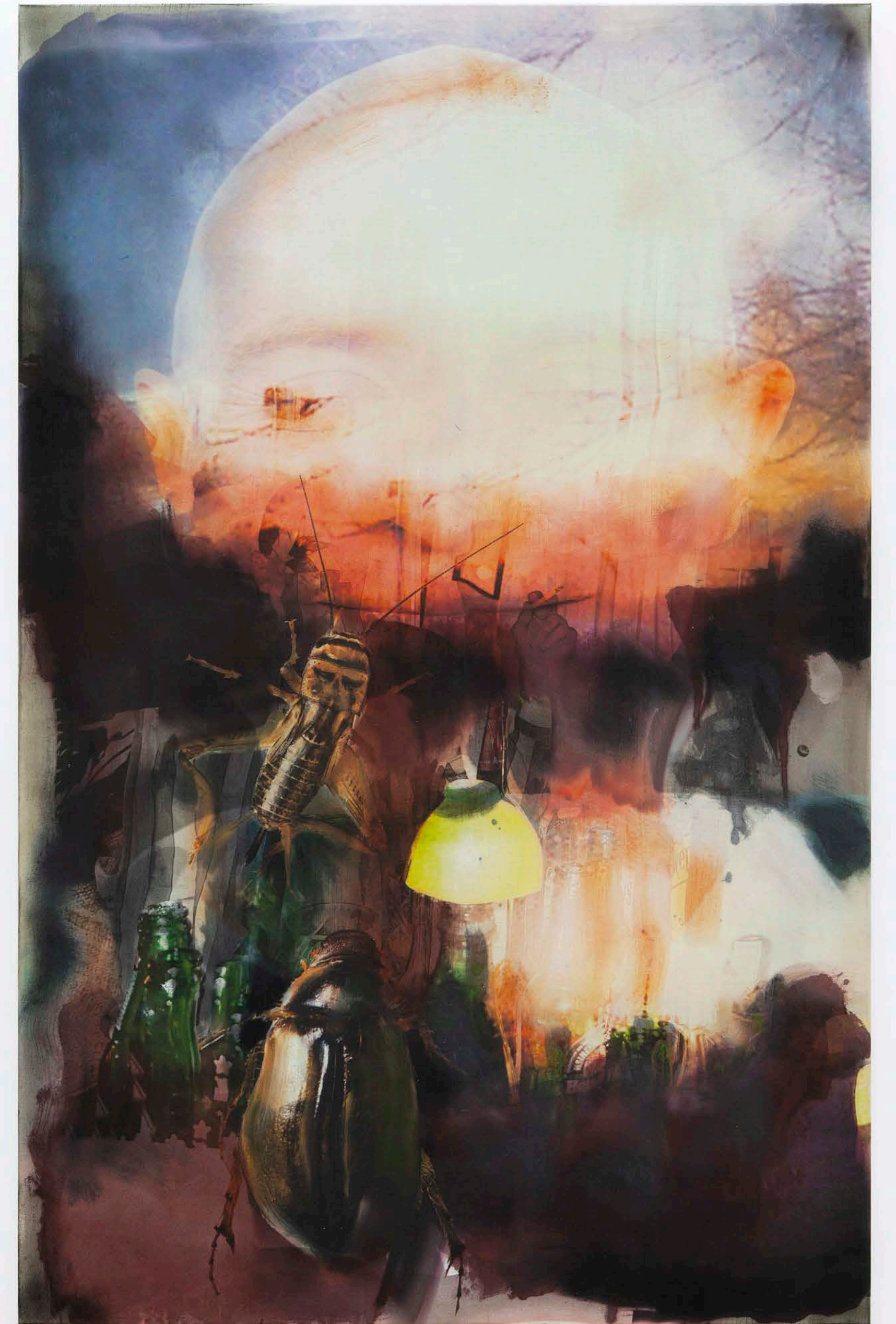
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a) : *JUMAP (top 40 sadness)*, 124 x 80 cm / ink and oil on linen (2024)

b) : *JUMAP (vous êtes la peste et nous sommes l'antidote)*, 124 x 80 cm / ink and oil on linen (2024)

b





a



a) *Late night fap in the open space*, 53x40 x15 cm, found drawer, stuff, hobby model kit, ink and oil on linen (2024)

a) : *Polychlorure escapism*, 11x20 cm / ink and oil on linen, PVC air vent (2022)

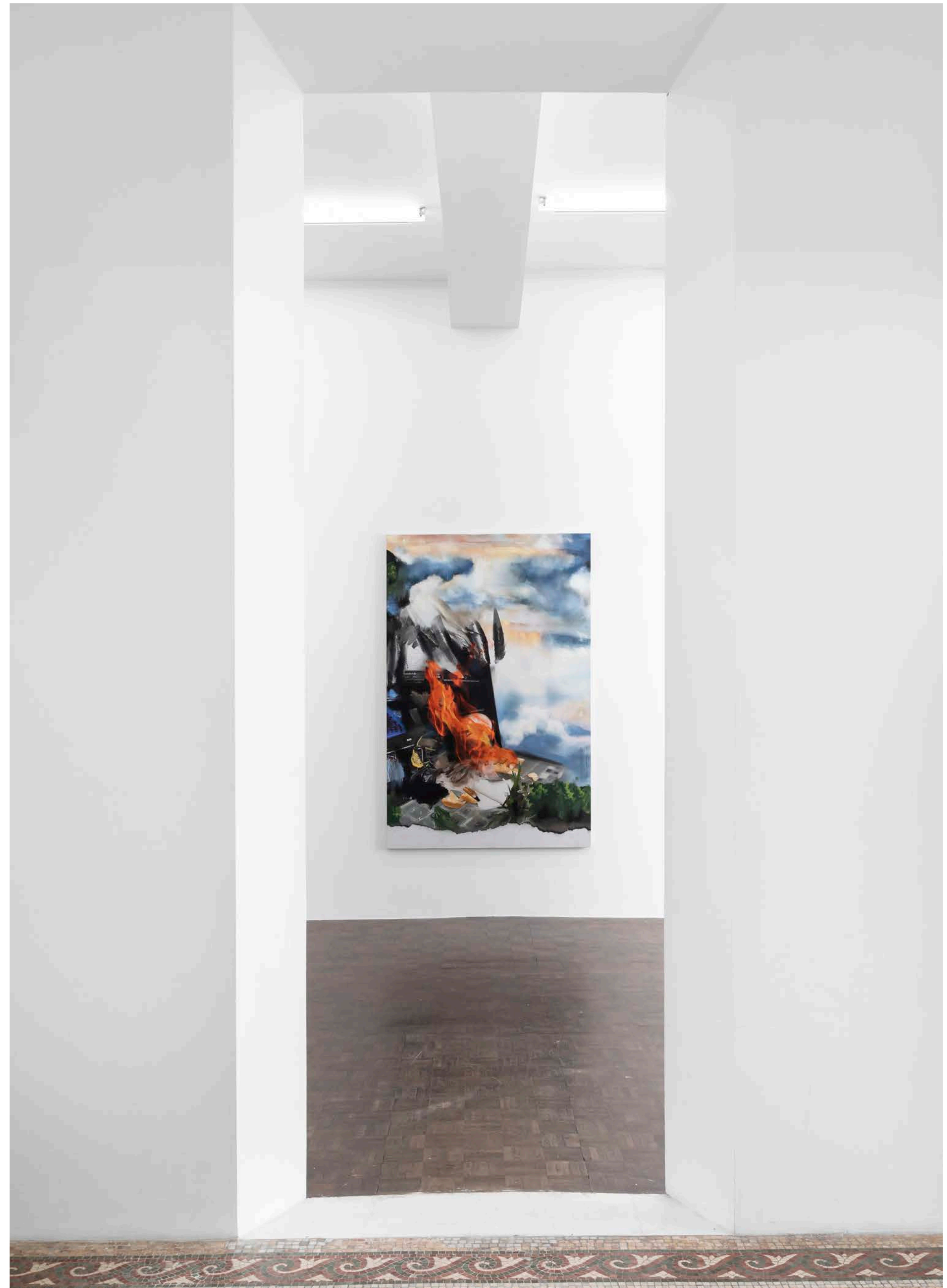
b) : exhibition view, *A sedimentation of the mind*, Meessen De Clercq, Bruxelles (2023)

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a



b



Brother from another mother

[...] the question of vulnerability is also in Gaspar Willmann's fiction. His work on the image is inscribed in a wish of never fixating it. 'My desire to build or fix an image often start by digest flux. Most of the time, the information is just the title of an article I will not read. It's a just an empty shell of truth keeping things open. I saw these news telling that people started to recognize themselves, friends or family on tobacco warning labels. So I started to work on this baby with a cigarette who reminds me a lot of one of my favourite painting called Melancholy, by Francesco Hayez.' The artist uses AI to complete the image and enlarge the frame of this story that already sounds like a tale. The image is printed, then painted and painted again, researching the good moment of the composition, the perfect equation. It is a romantic quest in Gaspar's work. It testifies of a fusional relation with the image and a desire of slowing down a world of mass production.

Gaspar Willmann use digital technology, data and AI to create spaces that generate fictions. These fictions delve into our emotions, habits, perspectives and what the use of data can contain of human, absurd, dangerous, poetic and also profoundly political. A fallible technology that creates an out of field and out of control space, that writes funny stories and finally submit to the affects in order to leave them some space is what interest the artists here.

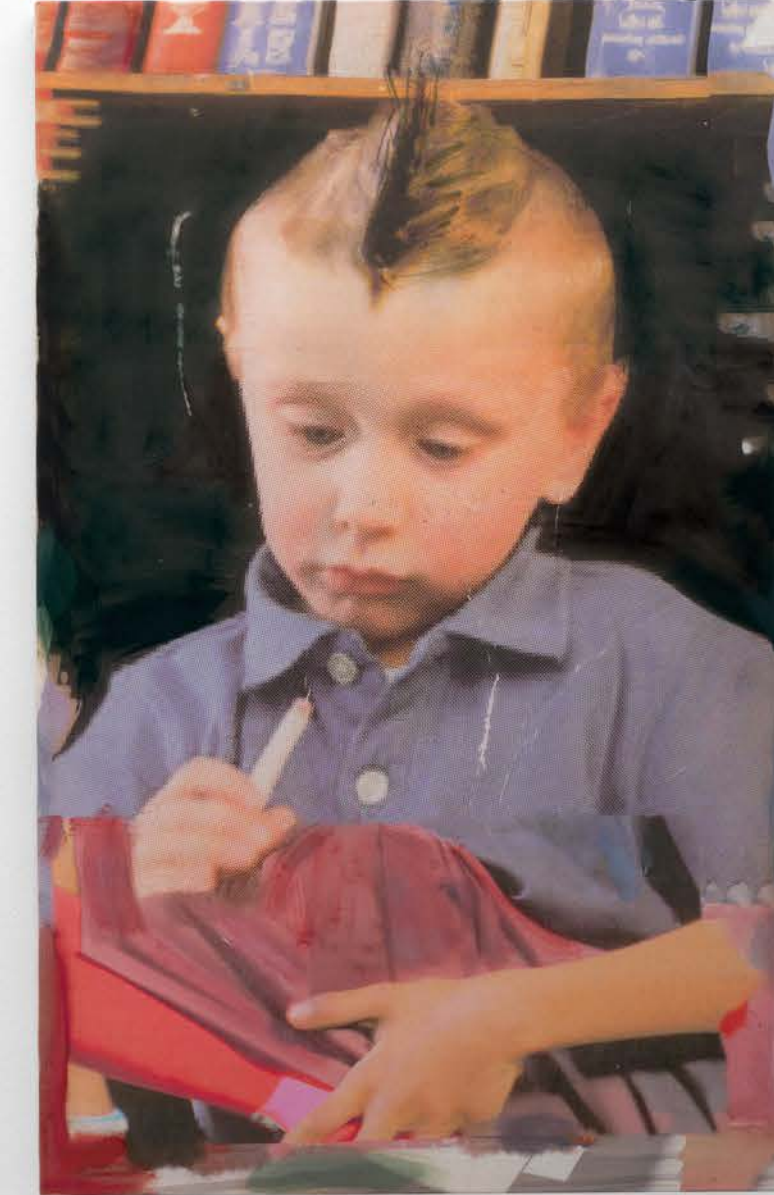
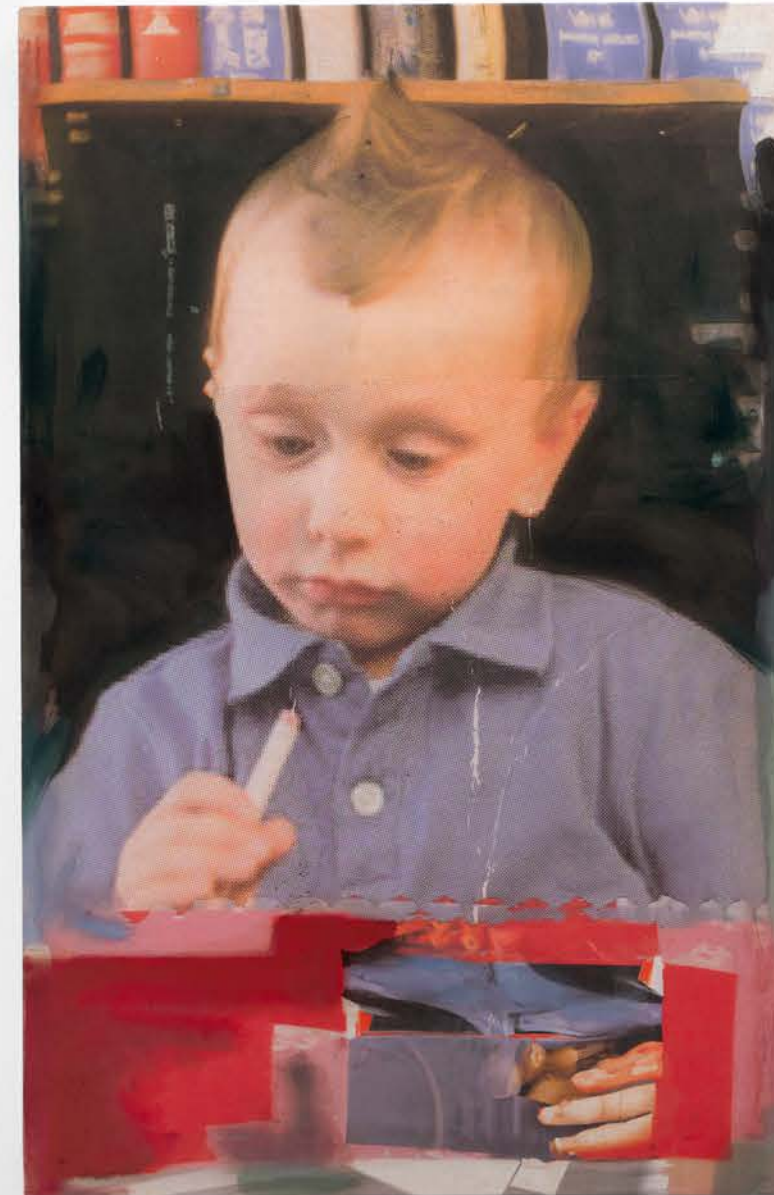
What technology holds of transparent, fluid, variable, and blurry.

It reminds me of the Cyborg Manifesto by Donna Haraway and the myth of the hybrid cyborg as a rejection of the rigidity of the borders separating the human from the machine. We come back to the cult stories. Her book is a critique of occidental binary categorisations. She concludes as such : 'I prefer to be a cyborg than a goddess'. Against a unique code that would perfectly translate any signification. For the reign of narration, romantism, and science-fiction.

Elisa Rigoulet

a) *Brother from Another mother*, exhibiton view at Wanda, Warsaw (2024)

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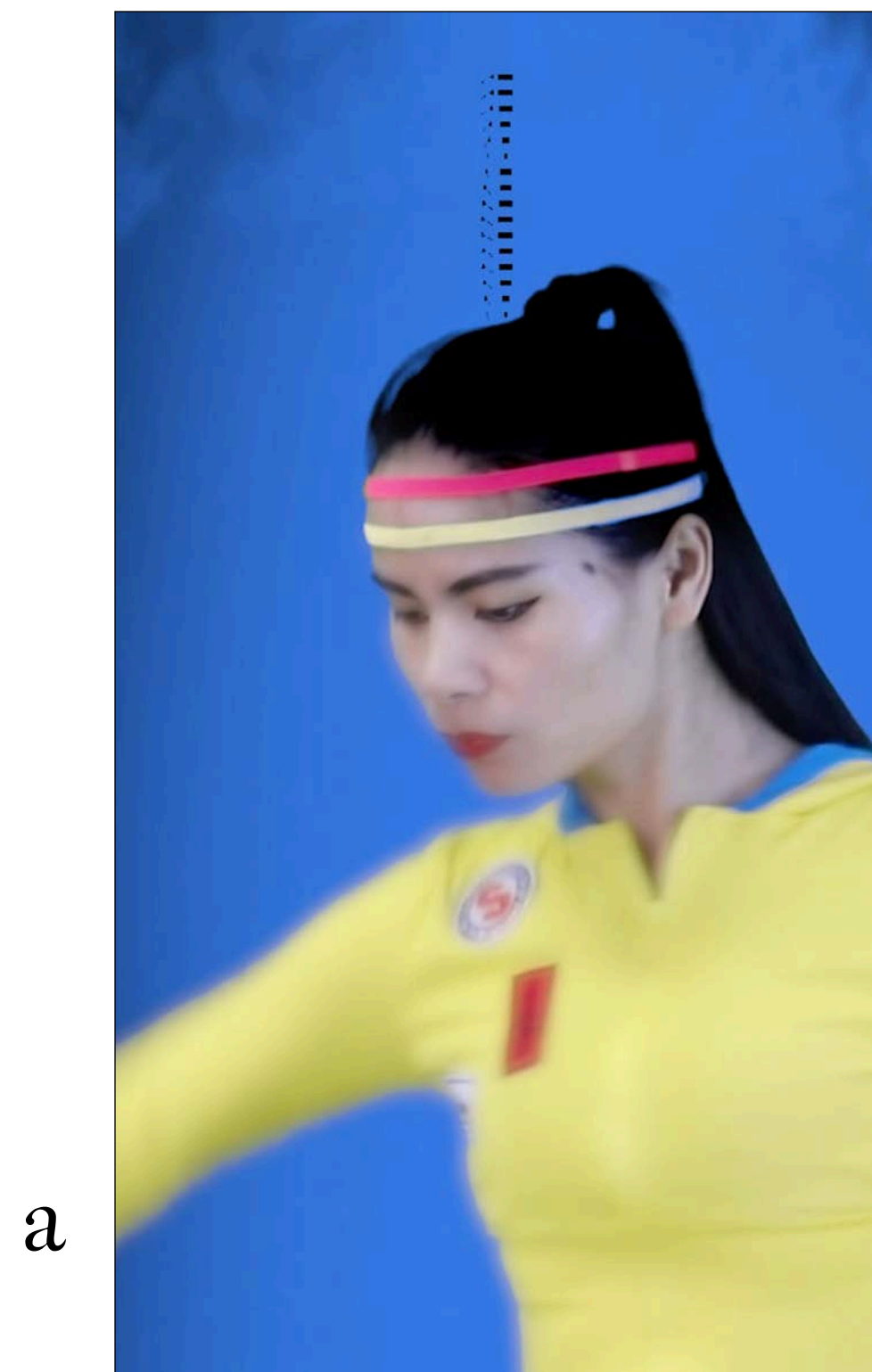
2023

a) Le pixel mort, exhibition view at Frac des Pays de la Loire, Nantes (2023)

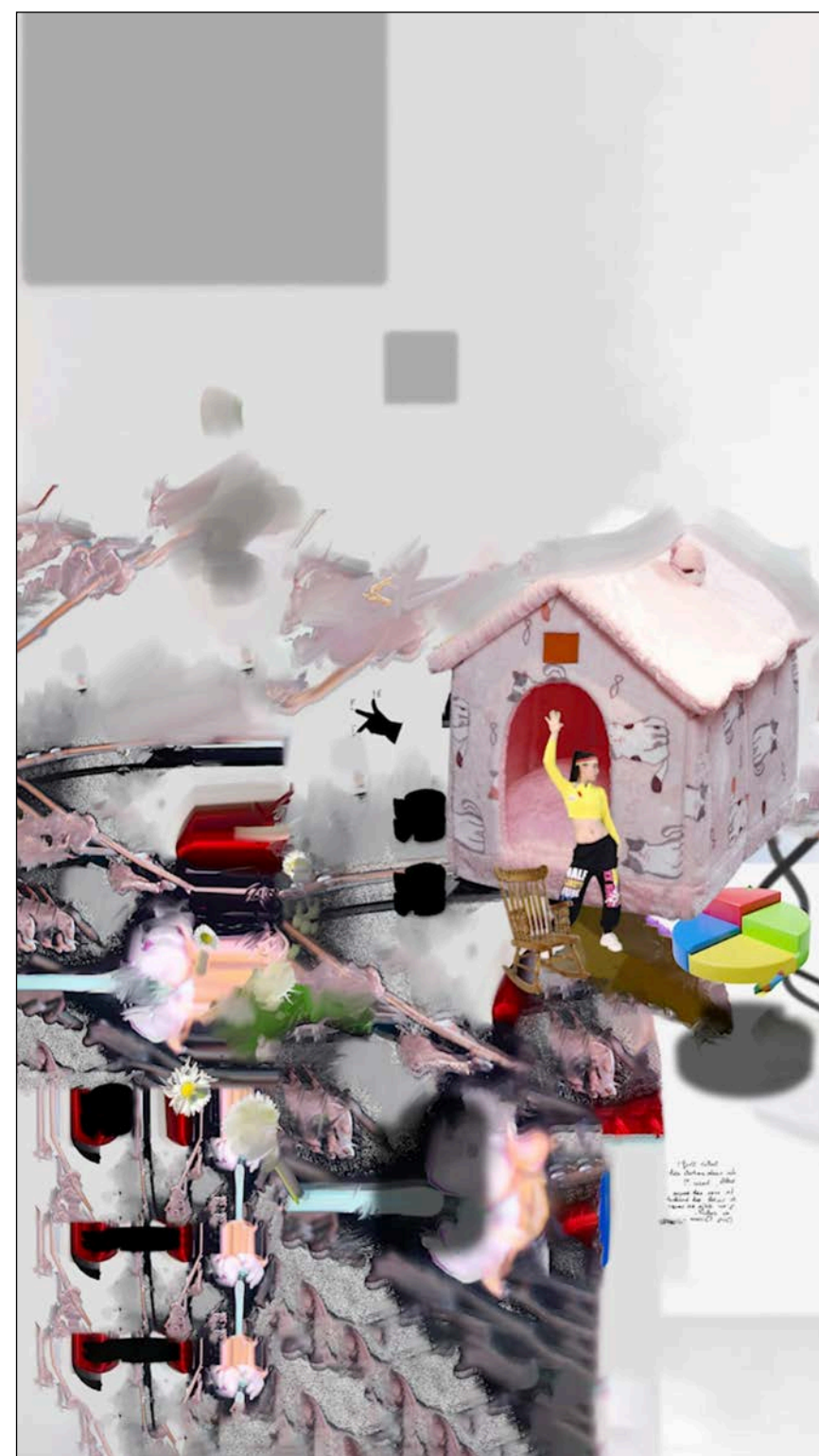
Installation with four distinct canvases, painted tree and a looping video (wood, linen, cotton, oil, acrylic and various prints)

a





a



b

C



II

a) Le pixel mort (Lily), screenshot / video loop 07'36"
 b) Le pixel mort (Lily), screenshot / video loop 07'36"

c) JUMAP (closing your eyes isn't going to change anything) 122 x 188 x 3,5cm / ink and oil on linen (2023)

Painters for a new millennium

When Gaspar Willmann, at these times that are his and ours, re-explores the question of reproduced and found images, their mediation and their circulation, he does so as a critical heir to the post-internet era whose corpse was left for dead after the 2016 Berlin Biennale.

Time have changed, suffering bodies resemble the digital utopia that wanted to dissolve them, and eyes have been opened to the structural inequalities validated by algorithmic rationality. While Willmann, who graduated from Lyon's fine-arts school last year, may pose as the heir to Seth Price and Artie Vierkant, it is impossible for him to celebrate them : the latter's « object images » which served as a manifesto for post-internet art in 2010, constantly moving back and forth between sculpture and its modified exhibition view (The Image Object Post-Internet published on several internet sites), are depressing because they open up the infinite abyss of nothingness right under our feet.

Early in his studies, Willmann undertook a painting project which failed to satisfy him : what was the point of such painstaking effort to reproduce something that already exists and which mostly leads only to self-gratifying circulation on social media ? He opted instead for found footage, before deciding it was also to smooth and empty. Until suddenly he hit on the perfect tactic of having them parasite off each other to break the surface, stain the smooth and bring out all the affect.

Today Willmann works in both painting and video simultaneously. His paintings have used the same protocol for two years now : first he create a montage in Photoshop combining two registers of images, some he's taken, others found at random in image databases. Using the brush tool, he retouches the montage, mixing the colours, and blurring the edges like watercolour. After that, he prints onto canvas and again retouches, this time on oil. A still life of edibles and plastic packaging emerges, often set against a sunset backdrop that is heavenly or crepuscular depending on your point of view, evoking a memory that is already evanescent, standardized and pre-captured by the memory of other images and other compositions that influence our pursuit of the « right » image.

With the « JUMAP » series (*Juste une mise au point sur les plus belles images de ma vie*), emotion comes easily, immediately, causing a sensation of « stupidity » : numb stupefaction mixed with an exuberant sublime, the type of affect of alienated modernity described by Sianne Ngai in her book *Ugly Feelings* (2005). In his videos, Willmann also catches the recent « emotional turn » in the social sciences as found in the work of Ngai, Sara Ahmed or Brian Massumi, hunting down the minor or altered emotions between frustration and impotence that are born from the image consumer's constant over-stimulation, the bedrock of emotional capitalism.

Ingrid Luquet-Gad



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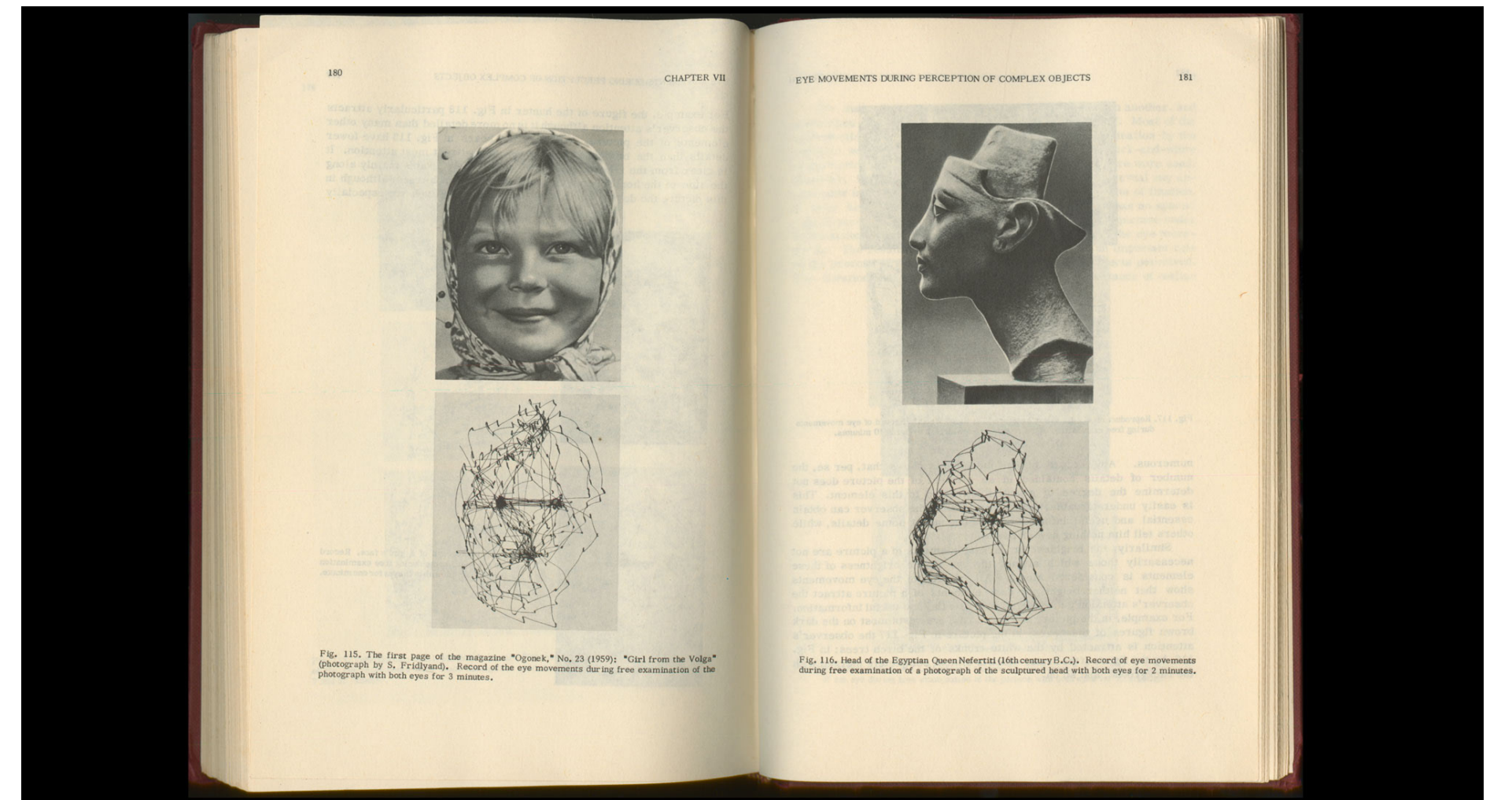


[...] In his most recent video with the evocative title « De trop voir, mes yeux se sont fermés » Gaspar Willmann explores the subject of eye tracking, or the real pursuit that modern oculometry represents, which pushes the technologies that track eye movement even further, to the point of predicting our future glances. Beyond demonstrating the now well-known links between surveillance and imagery, gaze and consumption, oppressive workspaces and ergonomics, Gaspar strives to show how these new «ways of seeing»—to quote John Berger—culminate in a sort of «non-vision,» where we no longer even look at what we see too much.

It is precisely this paradox that is striking in Gaspar’s practice: a practice that constantly engages with the false—images, vision, and the mutations of work—and plays with it. However, Gaspar’s work has no other pretensions than to continually reveal its artifices while multiplying references drawn from various fields, constructing a shifted, innovative, and harmonious poetics and aesthetics. For Gaspar, it is not just about developing a political discourse as a theme or form, but rather rethinking his own methods, favoring a slowdown and a reflection on the ethics of his work, particularly in the way he works with the actors who lend their voices and images to his films.

Line Ajan

→ <https://vimeo.com/793905345> (EN, stfr. password : DTV)







top : exhibition view, *Fresh Widower*, La Friche la Belle de Mai, Marseille (2021)
left : *Fresh Widower*, Vidéo HD, 9' with *M.J Wolfe*, PVC window, LCD screen (2021)



Slonfa Shenfa

11'49" (FR/EN, 2021)

Cliff, just forty years old, works at a series of small jobs as an online operator. Overwhelmed by the world he sees from his computer window, which moves without him, he decides to leave his Alsatian village and fantasizes about this escape: why not the United States?

This anachronistic story is freely inspired by a family history from the end of the 19th century, whose protagonists are interpreted by amateur actors found on Fiverr or Upwork. Thus, they replay their own economic and sentimental expectations through this role that is offered to them.

→ <https://vimeo.com/541635405/b489fadf9f> (EN/FR)

page 18 : exhibition view, Fondation Fiminco, Romainville (2022)
a) : JUMAP (every work day) 30x40cm, ink and oil on linen (2021)

