

Exhibition
March 18 - Apr. 22, 2017
opening satuday March 18



Thibault HAZELZET
Mars et la Méduse



Thibault Hazelzet has, for a long time, been identified as a photographer. However, his work never seemed to record the world as it appears. His images' only subjects are paper models, paintings, drawings he created that he then arranges and modifies in the studio during the photo shoot in order to make them less identifiable but mostly very pictorial. He then gets rid of all the various stages as if he only wanted the ghost or rather the skin of his process to remain.

It is only recently, after he sculpted little plaster figurines for the needs of a new photographic series entitled *Les Aveugles* (The blind) that he decided to keep « the skin, flesh and bone » of the matter : by confronting the plasters' physical presence to the dematerialization of their image. Since then, sculptures and paintings have become as essential as photography in his practice.

If, as Claude Levi-Strauss states in his famous essay *La pensée sauvage* (The Savage Mind), the artist is both a scientist and a « bricoleur » who elaborates structures by using the remains and debris of events, then we will gladly admit that Thibault Hazelzet's works exhibited today originate from the desire to

manipulate materials. However, the wild, thick and dense presence of the various matters is now substituted to the photographs' apparent mechanical neutrality. This all takes place, in the artist's own words, « in a debauchery of miscellaneous materials, that ends up creating, because of the uneasiness it brings about, a dialogue between the work and the spectator. It attracts and repels at the same time ».

This is why we find a profusion of substances in the sculptures : ceramic, tow, plaster, cloth, wood of which we can feel the age and use. Gestures as well, powerful, repetitive, compulsive even, which model, add, slice, subtract, assemble. And swift movements, briefer, lighter, to paint more discreet canvas. Simple cloth pannels covered with a thin layer of liquid grayish paint, ornamented with swift gestures of black spray paint. Between figuration and abstraction, expressionism and minimalism, primitive and contemporary art, Thibault Hazelzet's enigmatic constructions border on wild power and pagan spirituality.

Alain Berland

Alain Berland is an art critic and curator, he is the visual arts adviser at Mouvement magazine.

Thibault Hazelzet is a french artist, born in 1975, and trained at the Beaux Arts de Versailles in the painting section. He joins the Galerie Christophe Gaillard in 2008, his first catalogue is published in 2009, with a preface written by Quentin Bajac (Chief Curator of Photography at the MoMA) for his first solo show. Many personal and group exhibitions will follow in Paris and Lyon. The Fond National d'Art Contemporain buys in 2009 a photograph from the series «Narcisse». The complete Babel series (24 pieces) is shown at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lille in 2012 then at the Botanique, Brussels in 2013.

Michel Poivert, a French contemporary photography historian wrote texts for his last two catalogues : «Aveugles éblouis» for his last solo show at the Galerie Christophe Gaillard «La Parole des Aveugles», and «les fantômes photographiques de Thibault Hazelzet» for his solo show at the C.A.P. in Royan in 2015.



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