

# Galerie Thomas Bernard Cortex Athletico

## Press release

As-tu vraiment besoin d'aller là-bas ?

Artists : Vincent Gicquel

Location :

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## COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE :

### To paint on oneself

Yes, it is possible to remain a romantic whilst asserting that there is a continuity between daily life and art. Can we make the political dimension of the German Romantics and the Greek cynics coincide? If we stick to the pragmatist vision of philosopher John Dewey (Art as Experience, 1934), the artistic experience is inclusive and doesn't need to differentiate us from our relationship to the world. For Vincent Gicquel, this simplicity takes on a demanding, available and worrying shape – a moral, as such.

But let's simply start by learning to like looking. The painting demands this, it's its first work. What can we see in this new series of paintings? A human figure drawn in the middle of the canvas, launched forward in a position of challenge or escape, climbing a fence of paint or lines that structure the composition of the painting. This apparently organised grid will be constantly upset by the painting of instinctive, grotesque, burlesque and disruptive situations. There is an obvious contrast between the generic aspect of the central character, a silhouette, and the contradictory pictorial profusion that surrounds it, paintings within the painting, going from comic books to abstraction. What is also immediately striking is the central figure's gaze turned towards us, whose skull could be that of a skeleton: he gives us the impression of being surprised by our presence, intrusive, as if his paintings had an egotistical and autonomous life.

Is the character wearing a kimono or holding a lung like a handbag in front of him? Is he crossing a border or waiting for a bus? Is he an old man stooped over himself or a magician positioned on the American stars of a circus? "I like to think that this character has gone into the painting with just the clothes he is standing in, as one says, with only the strict minimum to impose on me his necessity. But I want each of my paintings to have enough to fuel someone every day, for a long time."

If there is a brutality, it is in the absurdity of human activities and the language itself. There would only be the body left, therefore sexuality and laughter.

"I don't want to repress the regressive character of incontinence – to paint on oneself. There is an almost naïve vitality in all these phallic symbols, and what appears sexual for me is actually linked to the pleasure of painting and of living. There is a Spring-like aspect in these erections, a vitality close to those of the trees that grow and secrete."

Vincent Gicquel mentions several times the ruthless humour of Thomas Bernhard on our futile agitation when faced with the obviousness of death, and taints Schopenhauer or Cioran's pessimism with an anarchic laugh in front of this paradox. "Do you really need to go there?", the title of the exhibition, underlines from then on the absence of an answer. "Life is just an exaggeration, yes. So what is the use? But it is death that lets us laugh about it. Should I still do what I should do? Paint canvases that I am

lacking, the ones that others have not painted and that I yearn to see&hellip;&rdquo;

Vincent Gicquel stopped painting for four months when faced with this insoluble contradiction. In the previous series, he sought to paint the motifs that enabled him to flee from technique, taken from anti-heroic and amateur painting vocabulary. &ldquo;There is no bad format or bad subject. I have painted dozens of dogs for example, that held hunting trophies in their muzzles and seemed to ask me: are you happy with your painting?&rdquo;

In this last series, Man has taken back his place, at the heart of the painting. He is wandering and raises questions&hellip; Vincent Gicquel is known for saying that he has too much humour to be a serial killer and he adds: &ldquo;I never look to hide the crime, in my painting or in nature, the bloodstains always land in the right place.&rdquo;

Pedro Morais, 01/2017