

Sébastien Bonin, Julien Meert, mountincutters

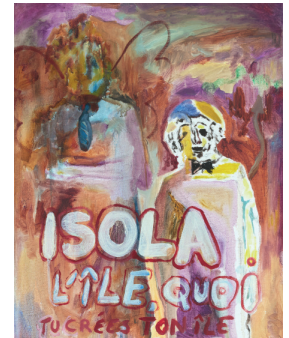
Isola (cur. Emmanuelle Indekeu)

01.12.2023 — 13.01.2024

Isolation, from the Latin *isola*, island.

In the track *Bora Vocal* by Rone - one of the leading artists on the electronic scene - you can hear Alain Damasio's call to isolate himself. The great voice of French sci-fi intends to create his own island in order to write his novel *La Horde du Contrevent*: «Alain, '*La Horde du Contrevent*' will only be a success - only if what - if you isolate yourself. If you isolate yourself damn it. Do you understand what 'isolated' means? *Isola*, the island damn. You create your island, and you avoid it as much as possible, you know. People have to be extremely far away from you, but far away, because your universe will be vast, what, it'll be immense, it'll be huge, it'll be an enormous universe, what. *Enorme puissance d'univers, quoi*» - extract from the track *Bora vocal*.

While artists need to be in the world, they also need to be able to extract themselves from it in order to restore this world, their world. The artists featured in the *Isola* exhibition - Sébastien Bonin, Julien Meert and the mountincutters duo - are no exception, developing an ability for metamorphosis and renewing our connections with the living and the transcendent. They are sensors and reflectors of the society in which they evolve. Like the *Furtifs*, those beings gifted with an extraordinary mimetic capacity, who like to hide in the blind spots of vision, in Damasio's novel of the same name.



Sébastien Bonin, *Isola*, 2023
aquarelle et huile sur toile
40 x 50 cm, unique artwork



Julien Meert, *Untitled*, 2021,
Collage, crayon et acrylique sur papier
30 x 42 cm, unique artwork

The worlds offered by Julien Meert and the mountincutters show us dystopian universes, populated by hybrid entities, drawing on our Western civilisations to form a futuristic archaeology. The works by Sébastien Bonin are used in the exhibition as clues, pathways, an opening onto hopes, a cosmos, a transcendence.

If, as Nicolas Truong says in *Le XX^e siècle est devenu orwellien*¹, «the nineteenth century was Balzacian, the twentieth Kafkaesque, the twenty-first Orwellian», could we be on the way to a Damasian future?

Emmanuelle Indekeu (november 2023)

Sébastien Bonin

Born in 1977 in Brussels. Lives and works in Brussels.

Sébastien Bonin uses pictorial and photographic medium. After an exhibition at Wiels in 2015, painting becomes a natural parent in his practice. For Sébastien Bonin, painting is a 'cosa mentale', between abstraction and figuration that testifies to the world in which he lives. Sébastien Bonin makes society one of his working tools by taking interest in what disturbs our daily lives through fragments of information, most of the time thanks to the documents that surround him, whether written or sound. The artist created an exhibition platform called *Island* in 2012. Sébastien Bonin is represented by Michel Rein, Paris/Brussels. Sébastien Bonin's work has been exhibited in cultural centers and institutions like Wiels, BOZAR, Botanique Museum, Ixelles Museum in Brussels, Karl Marx Studio in Paris and Kunsthal Charlottenborg in Copenhagen amongst others.

Julien Meert

Born in 1983 in Brussels. Lives and works in Brussels.

Julien Meert's pictorial work is at once (hyper)figurative and radically disembodied. In his works, one encounters faces and bodies that emerge from the middle of vividly colored backgrounds. But the bodies are reduced to smooth, stylized silhouettes, and the faces to vague features or a few signs, crudely sketched like so many mannequins and masks that tend towards abstraction. Julien Meert is represented by Sorry We're Closed, Brussels. Julien Meert has exhibited at Clearing, Rossi Contemporary, Island, Musée d'Ixelles, Wiels, in New York at Balice Hertling, and in Barcelona at the Alegria gallery.

mountincutters

mountincutters is an artists duo born in 1990. Live and work in Brussels.

Graduating from ESADMM (Beaux-Arts de Marseille) in 2014, they mainly practice In-situ sculpture, radically contaminating the space of places. Echoing this disturbance is an aesthetic uncertainty that favours transitory situations and unfinished forms for a priori chance compositions of wild beauty. mountincutters are represented by Meesen De Clercq (Brussels). They have taken part in numerous exhibitions: Palais de Tokyo, Paris, CAB Foundation, Brussels, La Verrière - Fondation Hermès, Brussels, 61ème Salon de Montrouge, Grand Café, Saint-Nazaire, Creux de l'Enfer, Thiers, Fondation Martell, Cognac, Art-O-rama, Marseille, Centre d'Art Neuchâtel, Switzerland.



mountincutters, *Objet incomplet (ctrl c respiration)*, 2022
crédit photo S.Verdon

¹ Truong, N. (2023). *Le XX^e siècle est devenu Orwellien*. Le Monde. Une vie, une œuvre. Orwell dérange toujours, pp 7 - 17.