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**01.02-30.03.2024**

**Stéphane Corréard  
& Hervé Loevenbruck**

# Gérard Gasiorowski & Malcolm Morley

## – For Bernard, with Love (1974)



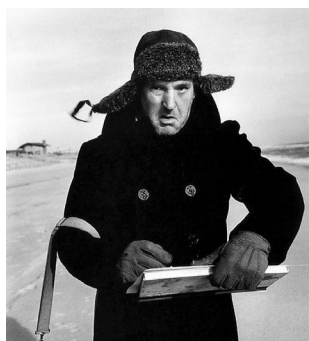
**Gérard Gasiorowski, 1973**

This is the first exhibition to focus on the links between these two painters, the New York-based British painter Malcolm Morley (1931-2018) and the French painter Gérard Gasiorowski (1930-1986), this confrontation focuses on 1974, between 21 November and 20 December, the date of their (only) meeting. From a biographical point of view, these links were tenuous, but from an artistic point of view they were nonetheless essential, and in any case decisive for Morley, who found in his exchanges with Gasiorowski, however fleeting, a way out of the pictorial impasse in which he found himself at the time.

At the time, Gasiorowski and Morley were both still affiliated with hyperrealism. Morley had made a name for himself with his clinical representations of monumental cruise ships (and, sometimes, their interiors or occupants, who were hardly spared), while Gasiorowski dissected enigmatic black and white images, unable to represent reality despite - or because of - their photographic fidelity.

In fact, both of them had been experiencing a veritable artistic crisis for several months; in fact, their painting expressed a genuine distrust of mechanical representations of the world; they were looking for a way to free painting from the straitjacket of the image. The violent inner battle invaded the very heart of the material, threatening their psychological equilibrium and culminating in what many observers saw as pictorial suicide for both of them.

Gasiorowski preceded Morley into the chaos; in 1970 he painted his first *Croûtes* in a blatantly bad taste; in 1974 it was the apotheosis of his *Guerre contre la peinture* (War against painting): he transformed his studio into a battlefield where the machines became mired in the material in Homeric battles, solitary and painful performances in which the painter strove to *take back colour from the enemy*. Morley, for his part, while initially remaining faithful to the object-painting, abused the image as much as he could, using smudged books or crumpled postcard leaflets as models, before attacking his canvases directly, with a knife or even a gun, and then exposing them to the public. and then exhibiting them.



**Malcolm Morley by Peter Hujar, 1976**

When they met under the auspices of the critic Bernard Lamarche-Vadel, Gasiorowski gave Morley one of his *Catastrophes*, a box containing an accident of miniature trains full of paint. Back in New York, Morley used it as the subject of one of his most important canvases, *Train Wreck* (1976). For the first time, Morley painted not an image, but a three-dimensional object. It was a decisive turning point, as he himself admit: *For the first time, I was actually painting space as something I saw before hitting a surface. That's the trap of painting.*

As the critic Éric Suchère detailed in the chapter of his book *Gasiorowski - Peinture - Fiction* (2012) dedicated to this encounter, this decisive contribution remains largely ignored. For all that, he writes, *it is not a question of asserting that Malcolm Morley takes up or copies Gasiorowski, which in itself would be idiotic, but that Morley's play is an expression of Gasiorowski's work, but that Gasiorowski's play on the crisis of painting through a playful questioning of painting, combined with violent destruction and a parodic dimension accentuated by a desire for the unattractive, is an element that may have encouraged Morley to undertake his own, and that this playfulness and this crisis allowed these artists - at a time when the prohibitions on painting were so strong - not only to paint while criticising painting or what was expected of painting, but also to break with an avant-garde logic that was still in force, to break with an avant-garde logic that had operated before them.*

**Gérard Gasiorowski**

*Char*

1973

Oil on kraft paper

48,5 × 63 cm



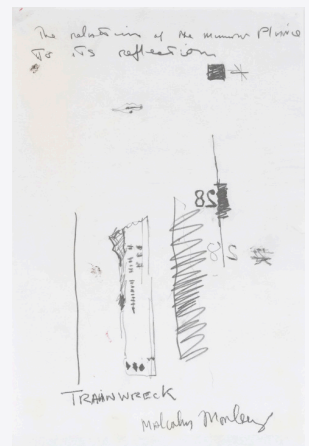
**Malcolm Morley**

*Train Wreck*

Circa 1974

Graphit on paper

29 × 19 cm



**Gérard Gasiorowski**

*On le disait paranoïaque*

1974

Acrylic and ink on paper

35 × 26 cm



**Malcolm Morley**

*Untitled*

Mixed techniques

35 × 31 cm

