

Sultana

Umbilicus

Jean Claracq
Paul Mpagi Sepuya
Paul Roupail
Elle Pérez

06 June - 20 July 2019

Les générations qui nous ont précédées ont épuisé le réel, ses productions, ses moyens de représentations et ses outils de classification. Le réel a été disséqué, écartelé. A tel point que nous plongeons désormais à corps perdus dans la virtualité. Notre espace commun traverse une crise identitaire et redevient un territoire d'expérimentations et de questionnements. Questionner notre réel, notre commun revient inévitablement à interroger, avec pudeur ou fureur, les lieux de notre « intime » et les formes qui en découlent.

Les quatre jeunes artistes présentés au sein de cette exposition nous entraînent dans un mouvement vers l'intérieur. Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Jean Claracq, Paul Roupail et Elle Pérez puisent dans leurs rapports au monde la subjectivité nécessaire à la production de leurs œuvres. Un monde où les identités, si elles sont multiples, sont également potentielles. Flirtant ainsi avec la liberté offerte par la propagation du virtuel dans nos environnements partagés, les travaux de ces jeunes artistes tentent de creuser un espace de réception à l'intime dans ce qu'il peut avoir de plus politique. Tous partent de ce qu'ils connaissent, Jean Claracq réalise des peintures où les périphéries de nos villes rencontrent les intérieurs de nos studios de jeunes précaires. Les points de vue de ces images peintes sont celles de nos Instagram et les activités celles de notre ennui. Le réalisme à la texture numérique des tableaux de Jean Claracq rappelle conceptuellement la recherche de réalité activée par Gustave Courbet.

Un siècle et demi auparavant, il trouvait lui aussi, dans son environnement proche, les inspirations nécessaires à la réalisation de toiles dont les sujets quotidiens devenaient des peintures d'Histoire. Les tableaux de Paul Roupail explorent aussi ce que la réalité immédiate met à sa disposition. Cigarettes, cannettes de Red Bull, papiers journaux découpés, bouts de paysages et morceaux de lunettes sont autant de gimmick visuels assemblés pour créer des sculptures picturales. L'extrême réalisme des œuvres de l'artiste en font des trompes l'œil. Si cette technique connut un âge d'or lors de la renaissance italienne et flamande du XV^{ème} et XVI^{ème} siècle, creusant le réel pour le rendre plus sublime encore, ici, le trompe l'œil n'a plus vocation qu'à accentuer une flemme mélancolique. L'agencement des objets dans la toile ainsi que la finesse d'exécution n'est pas sans rappeler les scènes d'intérieurs de René Magritte, dont le surréalisme forgeait l'imagerie d'une génération tentant de résister aux assauts de l'Histoire. Le chemin vers l'intime suivit par ces artistes apparaît comme un moyen de résister. Ces productions nous obligent à sortir de l'illusion selon laquelle nous pouvons émettre une pensée sur toute chose afin de nous reconcentrer sur ce que nous connaissons, ce à quoi nous avons accès.

En observant le travail de Paul Mpagi Sepuya, une phrase issue du livre *la Guerre* de JMG Le Clézio résonne :

« Parfois, je sors de moi même et je fixe ma figure sur un mur de brique. Je la jette et je la fixe sur le mur avec des clous. Je ne fais pas cela avec la pensée ni avec le désir, je le fais simplement comme on enlève un vêtement avant d'aller dormir. »¹

L'artiste né en 1982 en Californie, crée des mises en scènes photographiques. Réalisées dans l'intimité d'un studio, elles rappellent ceux des peintres du XIX^{ème} qui tentèrent de cacher leurs inventions du puritanisme ambiant. Les liens qu'entretient l'artiste avec ses sujets, avec les corps de ces derniers et avec le sien apparaissent comme une insoumission dans une Amérique en proie avec ses démons originels. Le corps noir homo érotisé devient le porte étendard d'une intimité moteur et créatrice. Les photos d'Elle Pérez se placent dans cette distance affectueuse entre l'artiste et les modèles. Elle suit et photographie ces personnes ayant décidé de s'opposer viscéralement à la morale et tout ce qu'elle a de plus fascinant. Les images d'Elle Pérez explorent ainsi la question du genre et nous met face aux déconstructions inévitables que nous allons devoir engendrer si nous souhaitons continuer à vivre tous ensemble.

La distance entre nous se creuse et ces quatre artistes nous invitent à rouvrir les yeux afin de produire les nouvelles visions du monde qu'il nous appartient encore d'écrire et d'alimenter. Il s'agit alors de faire société, de prêt ou de loin. Faire une société, de fumée ou de bout de papier. Se retrouver. Se toucher. Se regarder.

1. LE CLEZIO, JMG, *La Guerre*, Editions Gallimard, 296 pages, 1970

The generations before us have exhausted the real, its productions, its uses of representation and its tools of classification. The real has been dissected, quartered. So much so that we are now plunged into virtual reality. Our common space is going through an identity crisis and is once again becoming a territory of experimentation and questioning. Interrogate our reality, our common space is inevitably to question, with modesty or fury, the places of our «intimacy» and the forms that result from it.

The four young artists presented in this exhibition lead us into a movement to the inside. Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Jean Claracq, Paul Rouphail and Elle Pérez draw from their relationships with the world the necessary subjectivity to produce their works. A world where identities, if are multiple, are also potential. Flirting with the freedom offered by the spread of the virtual in our shared environments, the works of these young artists attempt to explore a space of reception for the intimate in what it can be the most political. All of them start from what they know, Jean Claracq creates paintings where the outskirts of our cities meet the interiors of our flats of young precarious people. The views of these painted images are those of our Instagram and the activities those of our boredom. The realism of Jean Claracq's paintings with their digital texture is conceptually reminiscent of Gustave Courbet's search for reality.

A century and a half earlier, he also found, in his close environment, the inspirations necessary for the realization of works whose daily subjects became historical paintings. Paul Rouphail's productions also explore what immediate reality puts at his disposal. Cigarettes, Red Bull cans, cut-out newspaper, pieces of landscape pieces and sunglasses are all visual gimmicks assembled to create pictorial sculptures. The extreme realism of the artist's works makes them «trompe l'oeil». If this technique known its golden age during the Italian and Flemish renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries, digging into reality to make it even more sublime, here, the trompe l'oeil is only intended to accentuate a melancholic laziness. The arrangement of the objects on the canvas and the finesse of execution are reminiscent of René Magritte's interior scenes, whose surrealism forged the imagery of a generation trying to resist to the onslaught of History. The path to intimacy followed by these artists appears as a means of resistance. These productions force us to leave the illusion that we can have a thought on everything in order to refocus on what we know, what we have access to.

By observing the work of Paul Mpagi Sepuya, a sentence from JMG Le Clézio's book *La Guerre* resonates:

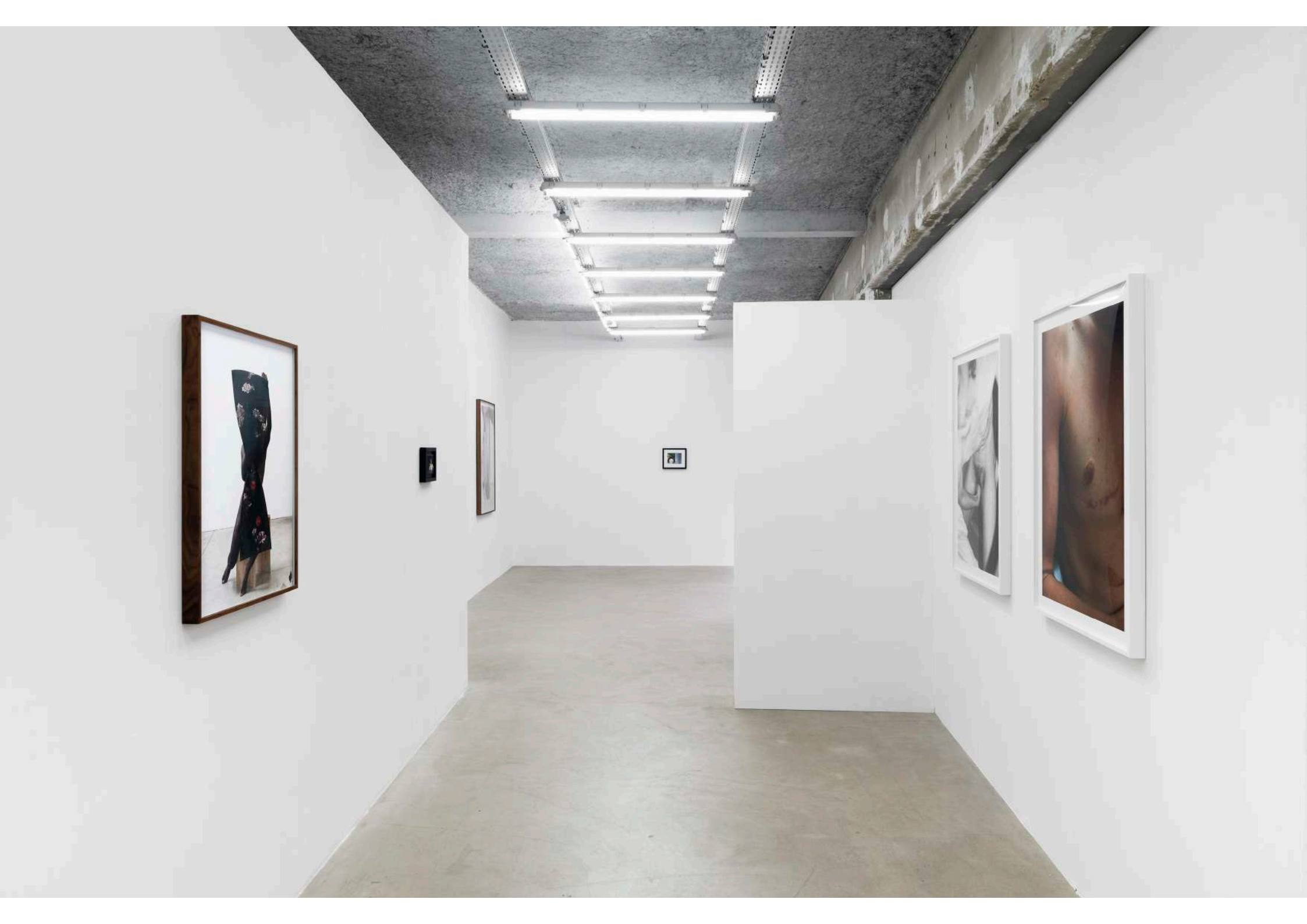
«Sometimes I go out on my own body and fix my face on a brick wall. I throw it away and fix it on the wall with nails. I don't do this with thought or desire, I do it simply as one takes off a piece of clothing before going to sleep.»

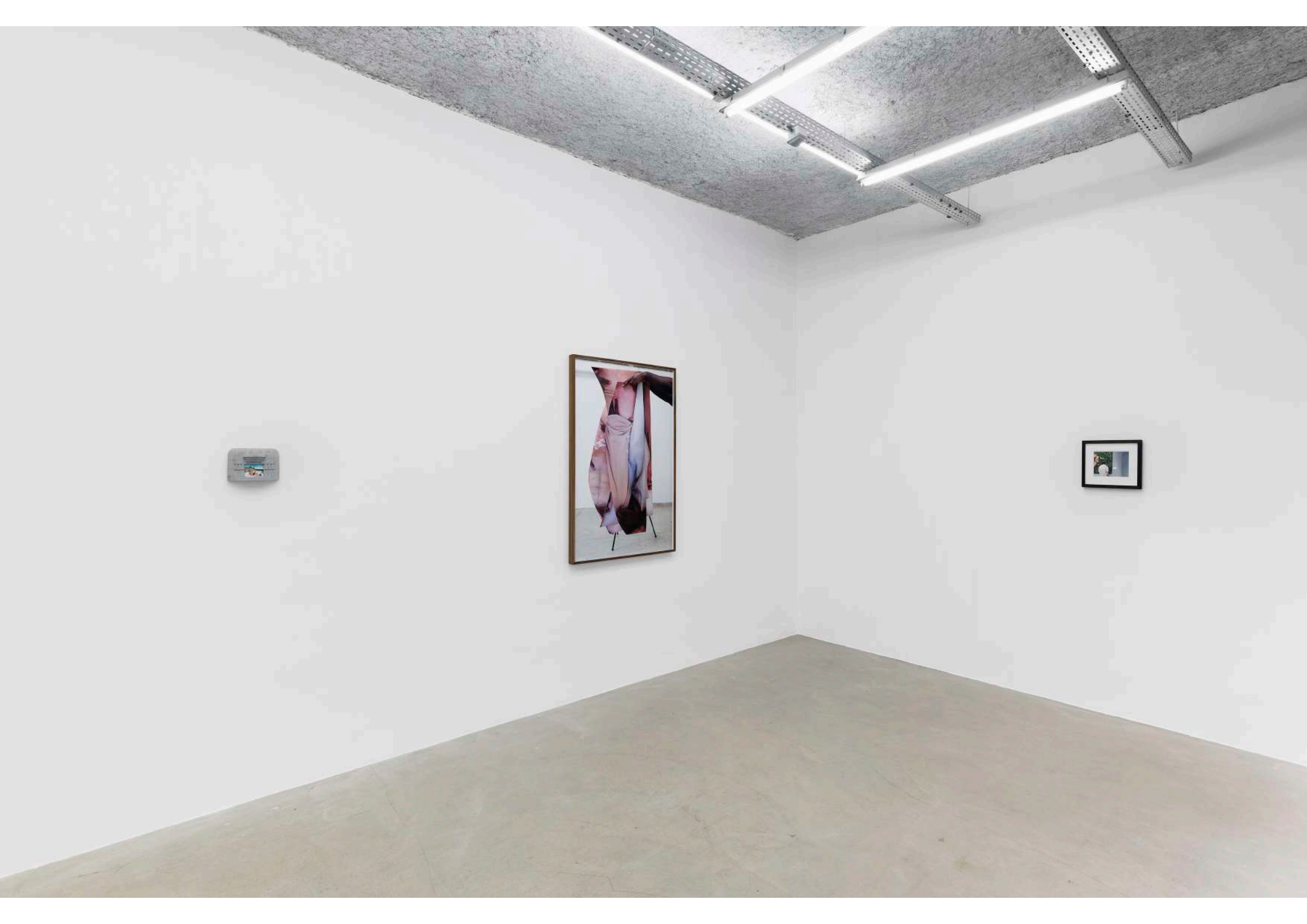
The artist, born in 1982 in California, creates staging photographic . realized in the intimacy of a studio, they are reminiscent of those 19th century painters who tried to hide their inventions of ambient puritanism. The artist's links with his subjects, with their bodies and with his own appear to be an insubordination in an America in the grip of his original demons. The eroticized gay black body becomes the flag carrier of a motor and creative intimacy. Elle Pérez's photographs are set in this affectionate distance between the artist and the models. She follows and photographs these people who have decided to viscerally oppose morality and all that it has to offer. Elle Pérez's images thus explore the question of gender and confront us with the inevitable deconstructions that we will have to generate if we wish to continue living together.

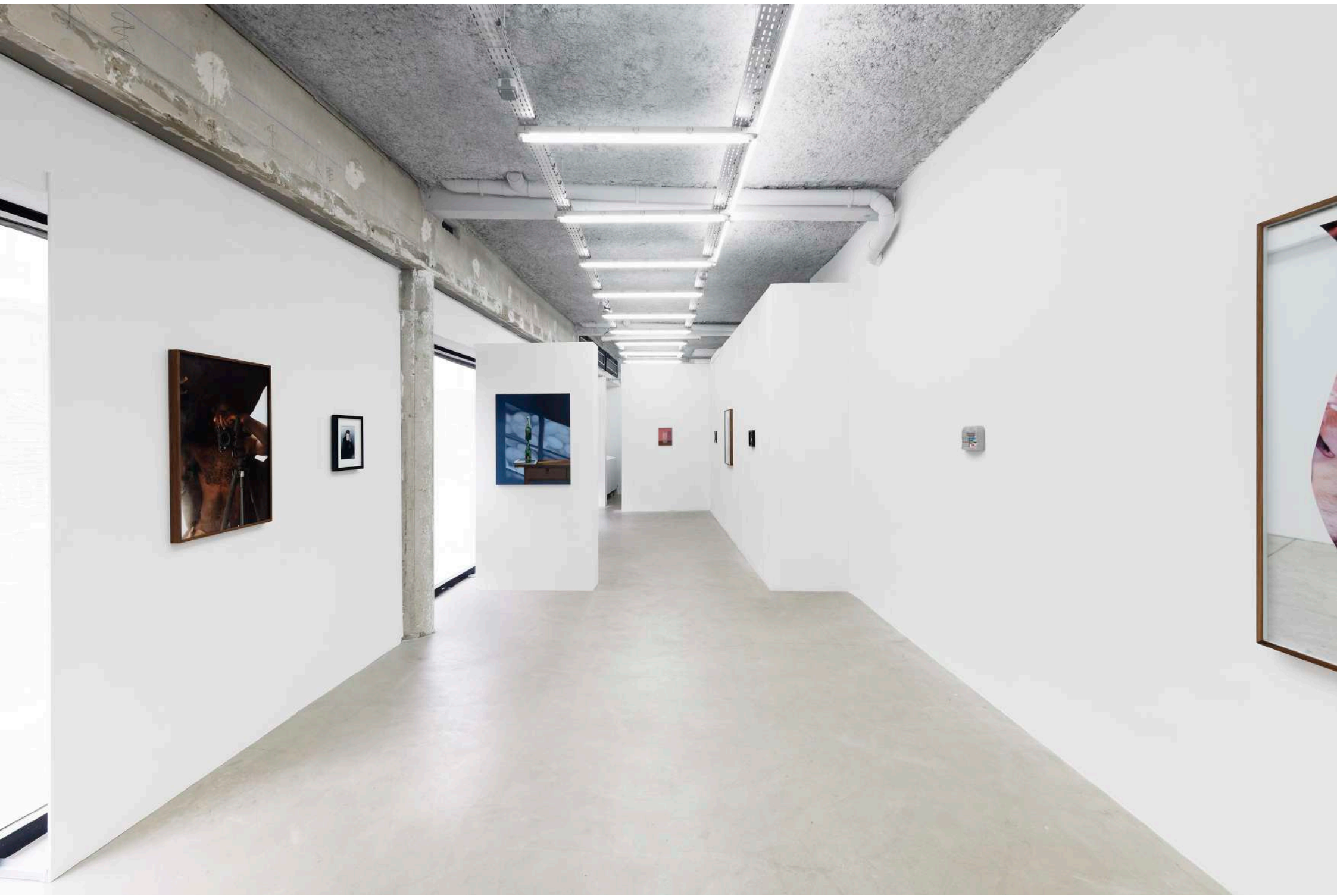
The distance between us is widening and these four artists invite us to reopen our eyes in order to produce the new visions of the world that we still have to write and nourish. It is then a question of becoming a society. Create a society, of smoke or of paper. To find each other. To touch each other. To look at each other.

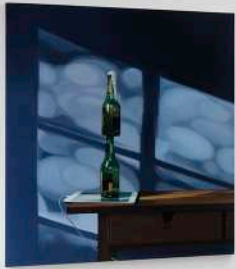
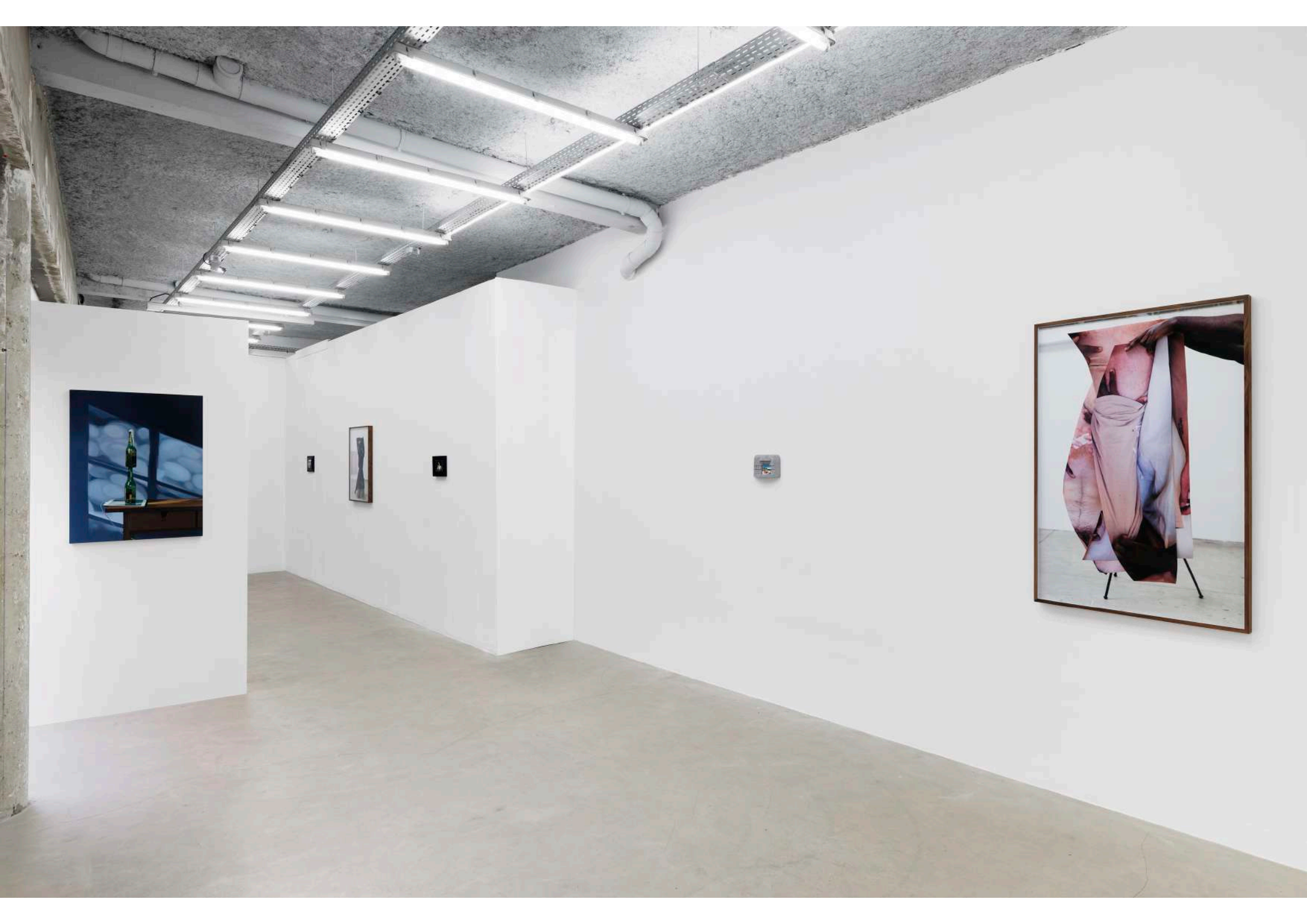
1. LE CLEZIO, JMG, *La Guerre*, Editions Gallimard, 296 pages, 1970

Installation views

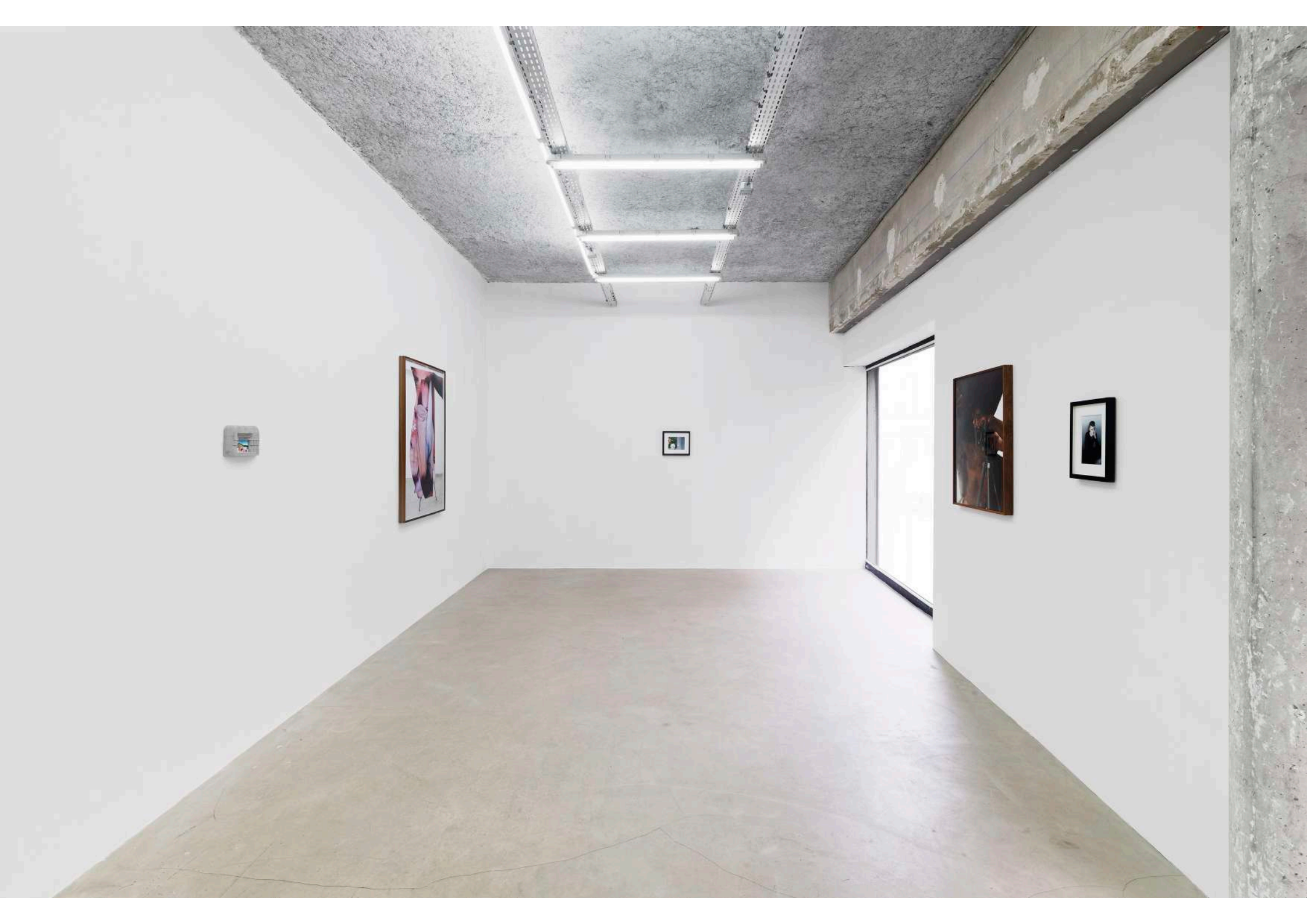








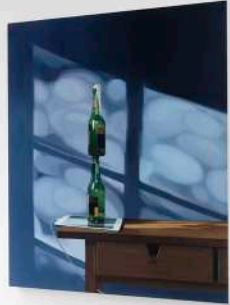
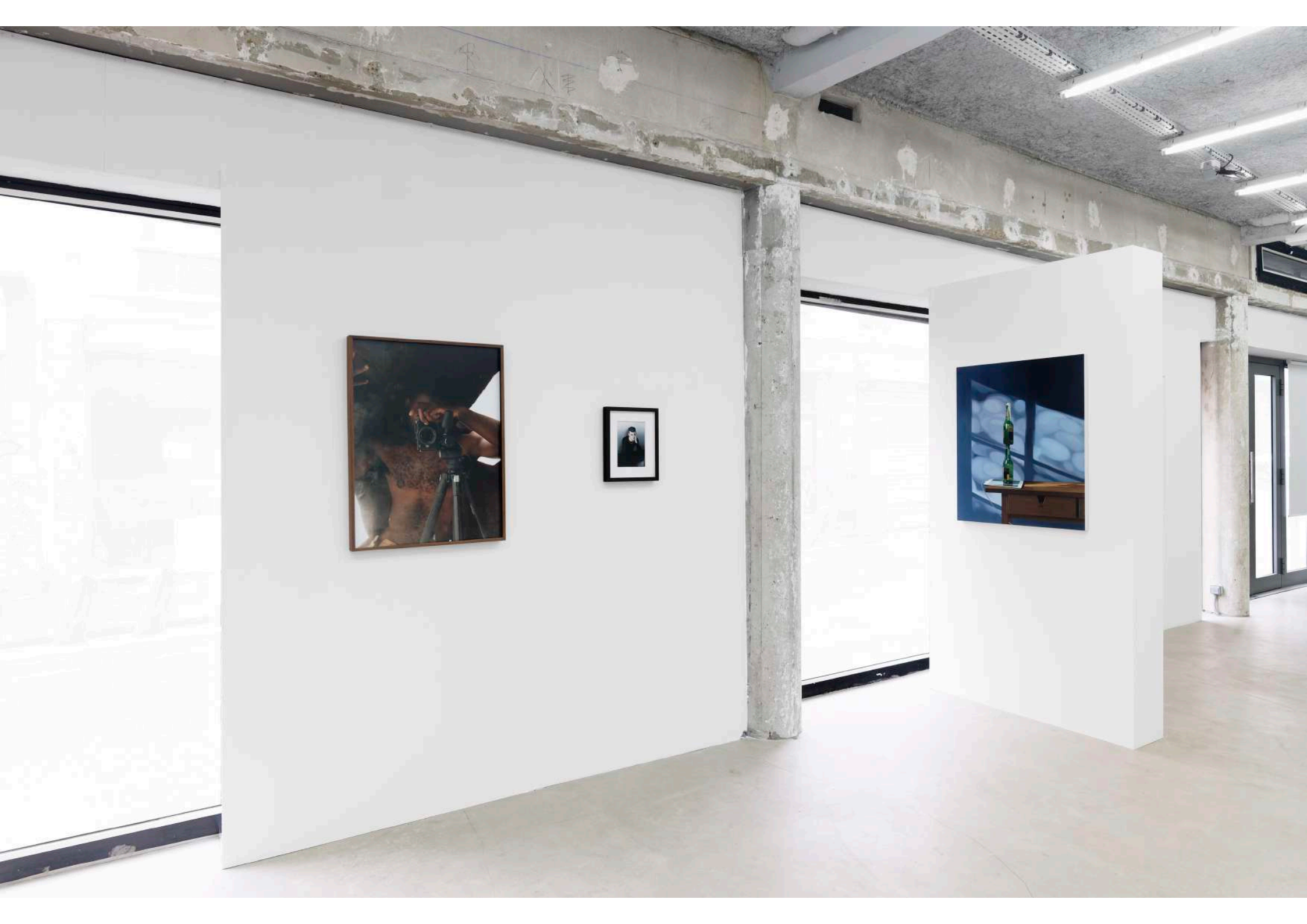
















Artists' biographies

Jean Claracq

Jean Claracq (born in 1991 Bayonne, France), lives and works in Paris. In 2017 he received his MFA from Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux arts de Paris. In 2018 he won the 2eme prix Antoine Marin and the Prix de peinture Roger Bataille.

Recent and past group exhibitions include *Les fleurs de l'été sont les rêves de l'hiver racontés le matin à la table des anges*, Praz-Delavallade, Paris (2019), *Futures of Love*, Magasins Généraux, Pantin (2019), « *Mais pas du tout, c'est platement figuratif ! Toi tu es spirituelle mon amour!* », Jousse Entreprise, Paris, FR (2019), *Artagon IV*, Heading East, Magasins Généraux, Paris, FR (2018), *Felicità 18*, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris, FR (2018), *100% Beaux-Arts*, Grande Halle de La Villette, Paris, FR (2018), *...AVEC MOI C'EST MIEUX*, Le centre d'art Chabrilan, Montélimar, FR (2017), *GorbatSHOW Gays*, zanderarchitekten, Dresdes; DE (2015), *Selective Memories*, Griffin Gallery, Londres, UK (2015), *Ciel d'Ether*, fondation Brownstone, Paris, FR (2014).



Jean Claracq
Simone, 2013
Tempera on wood
10,2 x 14,8 cm



Jean Claracq
Villa Romaine, 2017
Oil on wood
56 x 68,4 cm



Jean Claracq
Amine, 2018
Oil on wood
16 x 16 cm



Jean Claracq
Portrait of a young man oil gold leaf and diamond, 2019
Oil on wood
22 x 15 cm



Jean Claracq
Dallas, 2014-2019
Oil on wood
11,2 x 15 cm



Jean Claracq
zitchenko-dima, 2019
Oil on wood, concrete framed
14,4 x 22 x 5,4 cm



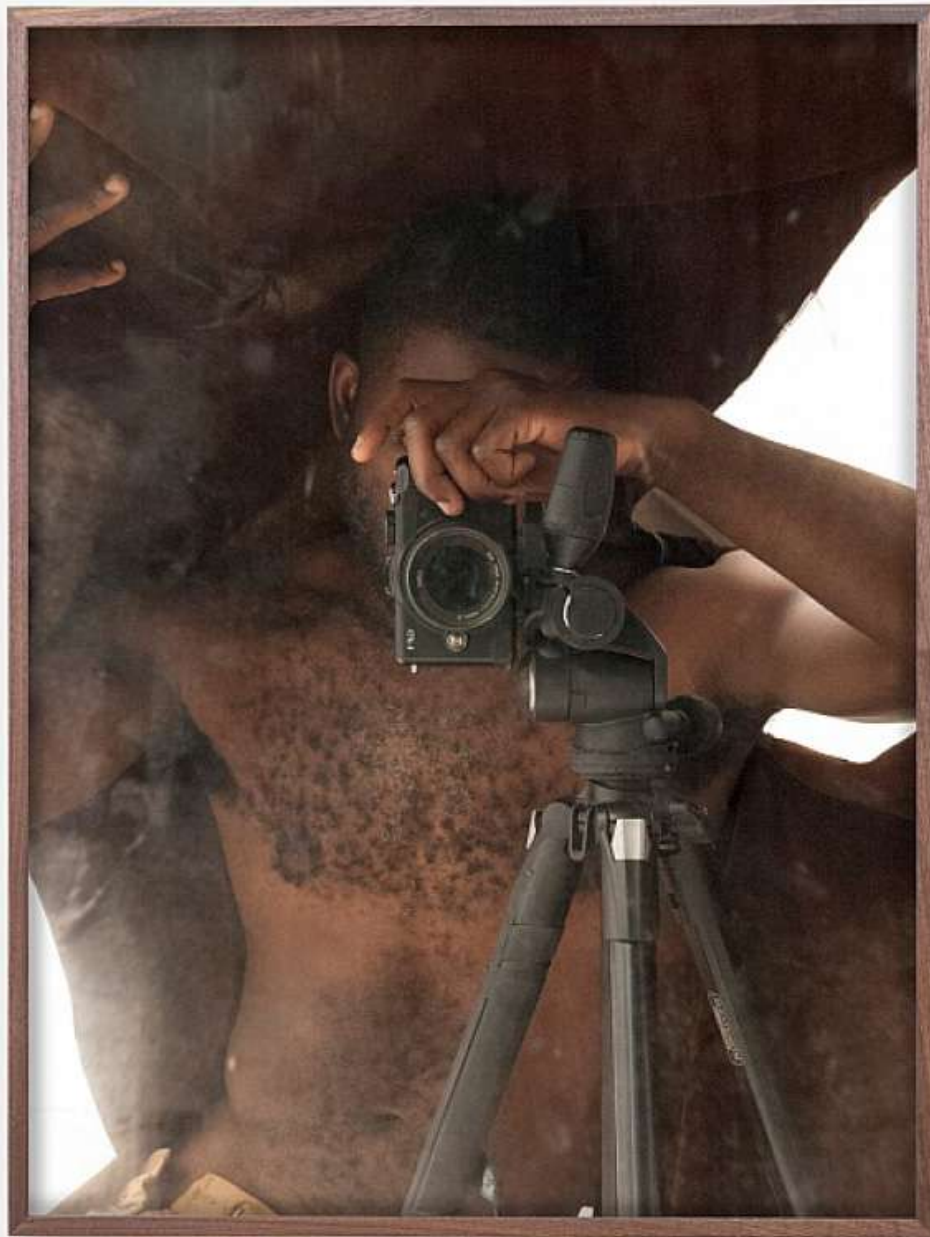
Jean Claracq
Narcisse, 2019
Oil on wood
15 x 19,5 cm

Paul Mpagi Sepuya

Paul Mpagi Sepuya (born 1982, San Bernardino, California) lives and works in Los Angeles.

Current and recent exhibitions include Whitney Biennial, curated by Jane Panetta and Rujeko Hockley, New York; FOAM, Amsterdam; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; David Zwirner, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; The New Museum, New York, NY; ICA, Philadelphia; Contemporary Art Museum Saint Louis and the Museum of Contemporary Photography. In July 2018 Sepuya was an Artist-in-Residence at Light Work in Syracuse, NY. His work is in the collections of MoMA, the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum, the Carnegie Museum of Art, the Milwaukee Art Museum, The Studio Museum in Harlem, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the International Center of Photography, New York.

Paul Mpagi Sepuya works in the realm of material experimentation with photography, portraiture, and collage. His photographic practice depends on analog methods of fragmentation and reconstruction, resulting in complex images that sincerely regard feeling and sensuality as tools for photographic inquiry. Sepuya makes photographs, books, and installations rooted in portraiture, homoerotic visual culture, and the function of the studio. The artist sees photography as a dialogue occurring in a tactile community of social textures, and uses the medium as an analytical mechanism for investigating the potentials of portraiture and the aesthetics of queerness and desire. Paul Mpagi Sepuya is represented by Document in Chicago, Vielmetter Los Angeles in Los Angeles and Team Gallery in New York.



Paul Mpagi Sepuya
Dark Cloth (_2040880), 2017
Archival Pigment Print
Edition 1/5
81 x 61 cm



Paul Mpagi Sepuya
Mirror Study (oX5A0486), 2017
Archival Pigment Print
Edition 1/5
129 x 86 cm



Paul Mpagi Sepuya
Figure (_2100597), 2017
Archival pigment print
Edition 2/5
81 x 61 cm

Paul Roupail

Paul Roupail (b. 1987 in Chicago). He received his BFA from Carnegie Mellon University (2010), and his MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design (2016).

Upcoming exhibitions include a solo show at Stems Gallery, Brussels, Belgium. His recent solo and group exhibitions include *A Heart-Shaped Face* (Two-person w/ Sophia Narrett), Jack Barrett, New York, NY (2019); «Salon: The Academy,» Curated by Claudia Rech (2019); Art Los Angeles Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA (2019); *The Ideal Room*, Smart Objects, Los Angeles, CA (2018); *Housewarming*, Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, NY (2018); *The Ashtray Show*, Fisher Parrish Gallery Brooklyn, NY (2018); *After Exit*, Smart Objects Landers, Landers, CA (2018); *Absurd!*, Little Berlin, Philadelphia, PA (2018); *Jump Cut*, Fjord, Philadelphia, PA (2017); *Thin Places*, Smart Objects Landers, Landers, CA (2017); *Flat Earth Conspiracy*, George Adams Gallery, New York, NY (2016); *RISD 2016 MFA Painting*, Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York, NY (2016); *MAXIMUM MINIMUM IN UNUM*, (Curated by Susanne Slavick and Josh Reiman), Miller Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA (2016).

Roupail's work has been reviewed online and in print, including the Contemporary Art Review Los Angeles, Artspace, New American Paintings, Maake Magazine, and Gestalten Press' Imagine Architecture, among others. Paul Roupail is represented by Smart Objects in Los Angeles.



Paul Roupail
Blue Room, 2019
Oil on canvas
76 x 91,5 x 76 cm



Paul Roupail
Coral Room, 2019
Oil on canvas
35 x 28 cm



Paul Roupail
Face in a Green Room, 2019
Oil on canvas
35 x 28 cm

Elle Pérez

Elle Pérez (born in 1987) is an artist from the Bronx, NY, lives and Works in NY and Cambridge, who works primarily in photography.

Recent projects include a solo exhibition *from sun to sun* at Public Art Fund, New York, NY, the participation at the Whitney Biennial, curated by Jane Panetta and Rujeko Hockley, Whitney Museum, New York, and a group show *Nobody Promised You Tomorrow: Contemporary Art in the 50th Year of the Stonewall*, Brooklyn Museum, New York, NY. Recent exhibitions include *Peel*, François Ghebaly, Curated by DM Office, Los Angeles, CA (2019); *Body Spray*, The Buffalo Institute for Contemporary Art, Buffalo, New York (2019). Pérez has held solo exhibitions *Diablo* at MoMA PSi, New York (2018) and *In Bloom* at 47 Canal, New York (2018).

Their work has been exhibited at The Stonewall National Museum & Archives, Ft. Lauderdale, and the Bronx Documentary Center, New York, among other venues. Pérez is a founding member of Junte, a local and international artist collective and visual art project based out of Adjuntas, Puerto Rico. They are currently a Visiting Assistant Professor of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University, a Critic at the Yale School of Art, and a Dean at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.

Elle Pérez is represented by 47 Canal in New York.



Elle Pérez
warm curve, 2018
Archival Pigment Print
Edition 2/5
113 × 79 × 5 cm



Elle Pérez
Untitled, 2018
Archival Pigment Print
Edition 1/5
113 × 79 × 5 cm