

Quentin Gouevic

Pour excaver la lumière

March 2 - April 6, 2024

3, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri II, Paris 4^e



1, 2023
Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 160 cm / 78 11/16 x 62 11/16 in.

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is delighted to present *Pour excaver la lumière*, artist Quentin Gouevic's first solo exhibition in Paris.

Born in Saint-Brieuc in 1996, Quentin Gouevic seems to be one of those who tend to explore, through their paintings, *a language of feelings*. The exhibited paintings do not represent, nor do they tell. They embody themselves as “paintings of sensations, concrete and perceptible to the senses,” declares the artist. A new group of four resolutely abstract paintings unfolds across the exhibition space, continuing a reflection on the renewal of the very medium of painting, of trace, of gesture and of color in the pictorial field.

And yet, when Quentin Gouevic entered the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Nantes in 2019, he originally intended to explore figurative imagery. In the course of his experiments at the time – and still today as he pursues his research at the Beaux-Arts in Paris – the artist realized that his desire was not for representation; it was for painting. With undiminished energy, Quentin Gouevic now sets out to exploit all the possibilities offered by the pictorial field: “the quality of the brushstroke, of the materials, the balance and beauty of forms, the relevance of traces, the strength and impact of colors, the depth of transparencies, the accuracy of tones and, above all, the overall stature of painting,” he says.

From this desire springs a gestural and colorful painting, vigorously applied in broad brushstrokes, thickened by the multiple interplays of superimpositions, overlays and transparencies, and always rooted to the artist's sensitive world. With extreme spontaneity, Quentin Gouevic experiments with something he calls "the deviations of painting". He welcomes chance, the sometimes happy accidents that he modulates and works on, remaining alert to "silent suggestions and hidden paths," he explains. The artist pushes boundaries, shifting the gaze to constantly renew it, sometimes turning his paintings upside down in order to reverse the locus of gravity. Ascending and descending drips deploy at the heart of the painted surface, destabilizing the viewer.

The artist's physical commitment to the act of painting – sometimes to the point of exhaustion – certainly stems from his working-class past. Quentin Gouevic worked in a factory then a slaughterhouse for three years, before attending the Beaux-Arts in Nantes. Today, the artist maintains a very close relationship with his works: the painter and his painting come head to head with each other, with the interplay of movement and power. There is a political dimension, which is important to underline. In fact, the artist states, "My heritage, the only one I really cling to, is my work force. So my own painting is in the palm of my hands. And every day, I send my hands to drink synovial fluid from the sources of my substratum. This way, when they come to the surface, they help me find answers." A message that gives palpable meaning to Pierre Soulages's dictum: "It is what I do that teaches me what I am looking for."¹

Beyond the pictorial challenges to which he devotes himself daily, painting represents for Quentin Gouevic an opening, a way of embodying himself in the world. By constantly searching, covering, renouncing, building and discovering, the artist commits his entire being, animated by a deep desire to go further in the pictorial field. Color bursts forth from these variously sized works, as Quentin Gouevic seeks *to excavate light*, wherever it comes from.

¹Alfred Pacquement, Preface to Roger Vailland's, *Comment travaille Pierre Soulages*, Le Temps des Cerises, 2012, p.11

Born in 1996 in Saint-Brieuc (France), Quentin Gouevic lives in Paris and studies at the Beaux-Arts de Paris (France).

Born and raised in a working-class environment, Quentin Gouevic left his industrial job in 2019 to study at the Beaux-Arts de Nantes St Nazaire, before entering the Beaux-Arts de Paris in 2023. Here in the capital, his research focuses on the medium of painting, exploring trace, gesture and color in a profound desire to go ever further, to continually expand the limits of the pictorial field.

Above all, he creates a "painting of sensations", in which he is particularly interested in both his own and the viewer's immersion in spaces and fields of color. In the process, his paintings constantly change, until they incorporate trace, overlay, superimposition and erasure as so many elements that enable him to construct his works. There are often apertures, breaches, windows: interstices of light.

His work as an artist is intrinsically linked to his sociology, and to his past working-class experiences. While painting he deploys his labor force and physically engages himself, almost performatively, throughout the whole process. His paintings are always realized without preconceived ideas and are progressively built up as layers are superposed over time. Shapes appear naturally and are then highlighted by rings and subtle washes of color. Experimentation and risk-taking are an essential part of his approach: they reflect his desire to go ever further in painting, provoking effects of surprise and new discoveries. The haptic dimension and sensory immersion inherent in the music he listens to (Black Metal) accompany him and join his research in its sensitive and radical aspects.

The artist was one of the resident of the first edition *encore!* residency in La Rochelle in 2023.

Paris Saint-Honoré

Fiona Rae
January 12 - March 9, 2024

Carole Benzaken
Éclats
March 16 - May 18, 2024

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri

Sophie Kuijken
January 20 - March 16, 2024

Laura Henno
April 6 - June 1, 2024

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri - Espace II

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March 2 - April 6, 2024

Brussels

Eugene James Martin
January 11 - March 16, 2024

Romana Londi
What is your substance, whereof are you made (that millions of strange shadows on you tend)
April 13 - May 25, 2024

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