

Than Hussein Clark  
*His Leftover Heart (Pauly et Cie)*

Than Hussein Clark was born in 1981 in London, where he lives and works. His practice is set in the interstices between art, architecture, literature, the decorative arts, theatre and fashion. It intertwines with the intimate stories of artists whose lifestyles were far from heterosexual, bourgeois models: among these artists can often be found Henry James, Jean Cocteau, or else Bruce Chatwin. One way or another, their stories always chime with his own personal upheavals.

For his second solo show at the Galerie Crevecoeur (after Hollywood Regency in 2017), the artist has conceived of an assemblage that transforms the gallery space and its usual pathways, made up of theatre panels, and inhabited by sculptures, each of which takes its form from the artist's narratives.

There is thus a crossing of tales evoking separation, departures, arrivals, but also death.

For example, there is Cocteau arriving in Marseille at the age of 16, fleeing from his family, and obsessed by Rimbaud, and finding the identity papers of a deceased sailor, before deciding to use them so as to work in a Chinese restaurant. Thus discovering freedom for the first time.

Or Gauguin, who always left from Marseille to go to Tahiti, on his way to becoming an exile. Hence the sentence on the sumptuous Leperello that opens the exhibition "what if every step is a step towards Tahiti".

Gauguin was later visioned by Somerset Maugham, in his short novel "The Moon and Six Pence". As for Somerset Maugham, his controversial divorce from Syrie Maugham, the famous English interior decorator, whose best-known designs can be seen in the exhibition, led to his move to Nice with his male partner, to the Villa Mauresque. However, its delightful swimming-pool, here depicted on a painted screen, was to become his partner's tomb. The wonderful resin spider-sculpture, including fragments of a dismembered armchair, which presided over Syrie's large white bedroom, here seems to be premonitory. Like a spectre, there also appears George Dyer, Francis Bacon's sacrificed lover, whose headstone inscription was formed by a pastel rubbing, made by the artist. Finally, there is Lily, the Comtesse Pastré, and owner of the Château of the same name, a great sponsor and protector of the arts, who organised a performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream in the gardens of the Château during the war, with costumes commissioned from Christian Berard, who was left with no option but to cut up the curtains of the Château. These costumes can now be seen in the curtailed drapery on the artist's new ceramics.

Marseille, as witnessed and experienced by the artist as a point of passage becomes, thanks to the narrative threads which he unfurls in the series of the works on show, the site for an initiatory rite.