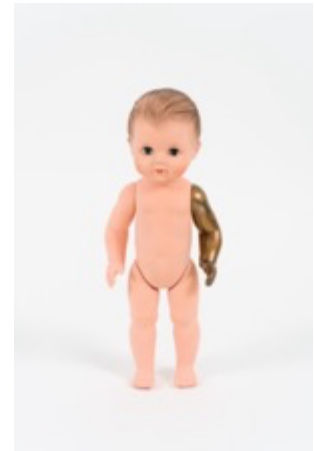


JEAN-LUC MOULÈNE
Clearly

May 19 – July 9, 2022

88 Eldridge Street & 36 Orchard Street

Upgraded (Le Buisson), 2022
Polyethylene and bronze
7 7/8 x 15 3/4 x 21 5/8 inches (20 x 40 x 55 cm)
Edition of 3 + 2 APs
[JM1883.22]



Note:

The baby or the doll is an object of projection par excellence. It's almost rhetorical, purely efficient. Thinking about the doll as a very complex object in terms of psychological, psychoanalytical efficiency, I was thinking, yes, but the material problem is that the doll is made of plastic. So I told myself, since it's made of plastic, let's ennoble it! And to ennoble it, I altered it with a bronze element. How many times have we seen works such as skeletons made of glass, a plastic chair made of wood, etc. – the silly standards of contemporary art! Here there are two chosen materials. I did not make the doll exclusively out of bronze. Basically, what I did is upgrade things for the realm of collecting, while maintaining these spaces for projection. One can still dress the doll, one may still style her, etc. And this is why I used a Petitcollin model, which is a French, upper class brand created in the 1950s. It is still produced today. So, when I speak about projection, the doll exists with blue eyes, as well as with brown eyes. But the version with blue eyes is sold out! I can't find it anywhere... This particular has blue eyes. I'm convinced that in terms of the purchase decision, it changes things significantly.

Poudrée, 2021
Steel and glass
18 7/8 x 18 7/8 x 15 3/4 inches (48 x 48 x 40 cm)
[JM1868.21]



Note:

The two basic material forces at work in this object are constraint and emancipation. This is what things look like when you apply them.

Rec & Mix (Le Buisson), 2022
Asahi Pentax 6 x 7 + Blender WMF 0.8 L
6 1/4 x 8 5/8 x 11 3/8 inches (16 x 22 x 29 cm)
[JM1885.22]



Note:

Tools visually emit their function. What then happens when you mix the type of illusion alluded to in *Rec and Mix*? There is an immediate optical illusion effect; this work lies halfway between image and object. But precisely, it's a machine that produces images, representations. And given its form, further, the question becomes who mixes them? In a way, you have here the source of many contemporary practices, even if I produced an analog object; the problems remain the same.

I made sure the work had two handles in order to harmonize things. The outer contours of the object are where your body begins.

Ressort Flous [Fuzzy Spring] (Le Buisson), 2022
Bronze and silver patina
19 3/4 x 7 7/8 x 7 5/8 inches (50 x 20 x 19.5 cm)
Edition of 3 + 2 APs
[JM1827.22]



Note:

I wanted to begin with an object which already had, in its very form – like the tools – a tension. A tension, a regularity in such a way that the development of an increasingly pronounced blur becomes perceptible. The front section of the object is not affected by the blur, the properly detached coil part. The object is affected only progressively by the blur effect, as clearly noticeable when the eye moves from one side of the piece to the other. Further, if you place your eye at the end of the coil and look through it, you'll see how it progresses into a cone shape, how it becomes reduced, that is to say you'll detect the formation of a real mass.

What is the question built into this piece? It is quite simply that faced with the question of images – and here the walls function like representations – the objects, and therefore the floor also function more like presences. Is there a suggested solution? We know all too well that a presence, if it is not inhabited by an interior image, will not manage to assert itself. But here we have an inner image which is somehow hidden. It is not a representation, it is an image in the mental sense.

Uranium Spring 1 (Marseille), 2022

Glass and steel

15 1/2 x 12 x 12 inches (39.4 x 30.5 x 30.5 cm)

[JM1891.22]



Note:

Uranium Spring is practically the negative of *La Poudrée*. That is to say that the constraint is not exerted against the glass. Until now I always started with a steel structure, placed the glass bubble inside and blew it through the steel armature. Here we did the opposite: we made the bubble first, and then forced the coil inside it; that's why it has a double wall. The glass contains uranium oxide, which gives it a subtle green glow.

Outils Flous [Fuzzy Tools] (Le Buisson), 2022

Bronze and plastic

19 3/4 x 19 3/4 x 19 3/4 inches (50 x 50 x 50 cm)

Edition of 3 + 2 APs

[JM1828.22]



Note:

In their very form, tools manifest the classical ideal of art, that is to say that their shape fully emits their function. A tool cannot be kitsch, its form expresses what it is completely. A knife on a table cuts through space, even if no one touches it. Once this aspect of things has been established, how does one see a tool as an object? That's what I tried to do with this work, it's complicated to fully articulate. The mere fact that I begin with real objects that come together presupposes that their reunion has a kind of necessity, a kind of geometric necessity in a certain sense as well. There is a center to the figure, but since there is a center, there are therefore peripheries – and let's be reminded that these are tools – so the possibility of grasping the piece from any protruding place from the center is easily suggested. Hence the handles that are tactile; each handle is different. And why the blur? Simply because I don't want to say why these objects are brought together. What are they going to do now that they're here together? What will these tools be used for? I hope they will be used for reflection, not actually for cutting pieces of wood, or striking nails. But reflection proceeds in the same way: it cuts pieces of wood and hammers nails.

The four tools I used are the hammer, the pliers, the ladle, and the knife. The hammer refers directly to the clenched fist, to the anthropological object too; the pliers point to the awareness that your thumb has an opposite, something that even apes don't partake in, except for a few; the knife is the slice; and the ladle is very

simply the cupped hand for drinking. In fact, they are the basic tools that are directly derived from the tasks the hand knows innately how to perform. One could have blurred the keys on your laptop, it's a bit the same thing.

The blurred area at the center of the object is rendered using 3D software. The progressive blur effect is precisely calculated.

Vaisseaux Verseurs [*Pouring Vessels*] (*Le Buisson*), 2022

Bronze, plastic, plaster and resin

25 x 22 1/2 x 23 1/2 inches (63.5 x 57.1 x 59.7 cm)

Edition of 3 + 2 APs

[JM1884.22]



Note:

What you see are five assembled bronze castings of plaster that were poured directly out of five plastic bottles on a slightly sloped surface. In a word, I filled the bottles with plaster, and I poured it. The ensuing spreads are the interesting thing. The plaster is very strong; it slows and hardens almost immediately as it flows out. As soon as I finished pouring, I plunged the bottle caps into each corresponding spread. The caps have been transmuted into bronze, and the bottles have been twisted back onto their respective caps. They protrude at a slightly oblique angle. I assembled all these pieces together, so as to create a space that is simultaneously open and closed, because obviously, these aren't standardized shapes. And at the outer edges of this closed bronze form will protrude the five bottles.

And I've tried to ensure that the bottles form a real geometry, exist in a visible geometric order. The promotion, by contrast, deploys itself in a more chaotic manner.

Any pouring of a product can also be called an act of promotion – pro-motion, setting in motion. Pouring a product out, using it is akin to promoting it. I did not use plastic bottles because I find them interesting. What I wanted to do is engage in the question of promotion. What does it mean? How to react and respond? I rely on our capacity for emotions first, but also for reflection because that is what is implemented, if you will.

OUI Acier 1 [Steel] (NYC), 2022

Steel

47 1/4 x 47 1/4 x 66 7/8 inches (120 x 120 x 170 cm)

[JM1881.22]



Note:

The *Oui* [Yes] sculptures constitute pure affirmations. They are arbitrary gestures. Affirmations of what, that's the question? Because precisely, the space I'm engaging here is a space that already exists. It is quite simply the classical geometric space, with proportions, the stable square, the rectangle, the golden ratio – it's not quite a golden ratio, but it works the same way. So it's a space which is the classical space. It's a bit like the *tool* objects: if shapes emit their function, what functions will these objects emit? These are the stakes. And while in the process of making them, I clearly saw that what is called into question is the function of the edge. These are not axes, they are edges. So we have the affirmation of space, but also the affirmation of the limit of space. It should be noted that affirmation is a gesture that generally moves outward, whereas to make these sculptures, on the contrary, you must *deny*, you need to say no! You need to make a clean sweep before starting the object. And as you gradually construct the sculpture, you'll eventually reach the point when you can affirm it.

The *Ouis* [Yes] are pieces that seem very simple at first glance – we could describe them, if you will, via experiences from Anthony Caro, but that's not it. It's not abstract sculpture, it's really space in the most concrete sense of the term. If there was an artist to allude to, I would suggest Fred Sandback, because Sandback's space partly sustains these forms; not the affirmation aspect, nor the 'yes' – because he remained too close to painting in the end – but yes formally you find Sandback.

OUI Acier 2 [Steel] (NYC), 2022

Steel

59 1/8 x 59 1/8 x 71 1/4 inches (150 x 150 x 181 cm)

[JM1882.22]



Tournée-Tournante [Turned-Turning] (Vierzon), 2022
Hard Foam and black soft touch coat
29 1/2 x 6 3/4 inches (75 x 17 cm)
[JM1890.22]



Note:

For starters, spinning stuff is always interesting to watch. In essence things that turn or spin are of two types. When I started this work, I was wondering what would happen if you took two columns, placed them side by side and rotated them against one another, so that they begin to wear out. I wanted to apply to columns the principle of wear and tear that I used in other sculptures. Then things like spiral surfaces came to mind, but we soon realized that nothing happens, that in the end, when you cut the two columns, they end up having a common point, nothing more, nothing less. When you make two objects intersect; you make them rotate on top of one another; in the end, it's just one point, and in between, you get cones. It's just like that. I've thought so much about shapes you can obtain by rotating one object against another, but in the end, in the logic of exhibitions in general, I realized that it might be more productive to reveal the problem itself, rather than try to solve it aesthetically, or to take advantage of it by becoming a sculptor of columns, for instance! What distinguishes these two columns – and the title says it clearly – is that one is rotated or spinned – that is the symmetrical one is rotated – and the other column is rotating or spinning, which is not quite the same thing. They have in common their line of contact.

OUI Bubu (Le Buisson), 2022
Wood and tar
36 5/8 x 26 3/4 x 9 7/8 inches (93 x 68 x 25 cm)
[JM1888.22]



Note:

This work constitutes an attempt at objectification, at transforming an object. It's a simple story: I was watching an episode of *Law and Order* on YouTube – lots of murders! Since it's obviously boring, I tend to observe the sets in detail, and because of my figure / background composition habit, I distribute and balance my gaze between the sets and the actors, which means that in general I don't understand anything about the film! So here I stumbled upon a bourgeois decor, with wallpaper and a bedside lamp, with a painting, a small painting on the lit wall, inside of which was a black and white drawing. It was something to scare you. It made me think of one of the very first paintings by Luc Tuymans, which is titled *Hantise*, I believe? It's his only picture which is painted, in the sense that there is a certain thickness to the paint. The Spanish would call it 'a bicho', a beast, a cockroach...

it's also the story of Kafka's metamorphosis, this type of vision... So there was that on a little painting; I therefore immediately stopped the film; backspaced it, and took a screenshot to note the shape of this little drawing. And I looked at it for about a year, asking myself what is happening here, what is this thing? Until I finally understood what I was seeing, and hence became able to execute this object. And as you can see, in fact, you have two figures: you have an X figure, which is naturalistic, and you have a T figure, or a geometric figure, which is all cylinders and looks mechanical. And so once I figured it out, I made a model for this TV series, regardless of the story. What is at stake, as it were, is how to materialize a form of obsession, or fear, let's be clear. And what I find very beautiful is that by objectifying it, you'll see, it becomes very soft; the figure seems nice!

Quelque Chose Blanc (Knot 3.1 Color Spectrum) (Le Buisson), 2022
Oil paint on hard foam
18 1/2 x 28 3/4 x 28 3/4 inches (47 x 73 x 73 cm)
[JM1869.22]



Note:

The color spectrum is always presented on a flat plane. And we're told that by rotating it in light, combining all colors produces white. This is the starting point of reflecting upon what is designated as light color as opposed to material color. Take red, green, blue, project them together, you get a kind of white. That's basically what happens on your TV screen. Take the same colors and mix them materially, you'll get a brown. If you mix them optically, luminously, you get white. So, hence the question of something white? It's this type of white I'm addressing, the luminous white, the white of light. The thinking comes from the fact that every color is experienced as a surface. It's paint that you apply on top of things. Now, if you look at light, you see that light appears in blocks. You see that it appears in volumes. It's not simply light, it clings to things, it moves around, and it moves in volume. Alright, that's the first part of the reflection. I then posed the question: can one actually imagine a representation which would be as simple as the flat chromatic circle, but which would be a volume upon which this chromatic circle would be distributed in the same way? And so I chose the trefoil knot simply because it happens to be the simplest.

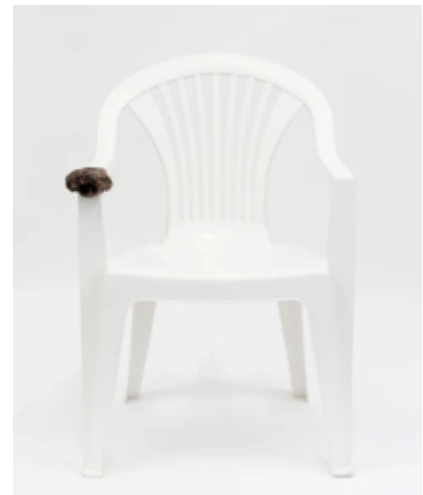
Quelque Chose Blanc (Clover Knot – Three Colors) (Marseille), 2022
Glass
15 3/8 x 15 3/8 x 15 3/8 inches (39 x 39 x 39 cm)
[JM1886.22]



Note:

This work activates the same basic operation as the hard foam version of *Quelque Chose Blanc*, except that the knot here is made of glass. Technically, we started by making a long bubble, upon which the three colors were placed, blue, yellow, and red. Then we tied our knot. In this case, we took pure color, and with a cane we made a small bubble. Then we opened the bubble and turned it into a cylinder. Three people are working at the same time. One makes a little red cylinder, the other a blue one, and the third the yellow. And then, when the glass is hot, they stick them face to face, so you end up with a long three color cylinder, the last one is closed, but it's pure color. That is to say that if you blow this, you will not see anything, it will be practically dark. Then you add white glass on top, which will solidify the bubble. This allows you to hold the heat, to distribute it, and little by little you blow, after making the knot of course. So what you'll see when you turn around the work, what you see coming down – that yellow with a red line and a blue line – is a cord inside the sphere. It's not a surface effect, it's an interior volume.

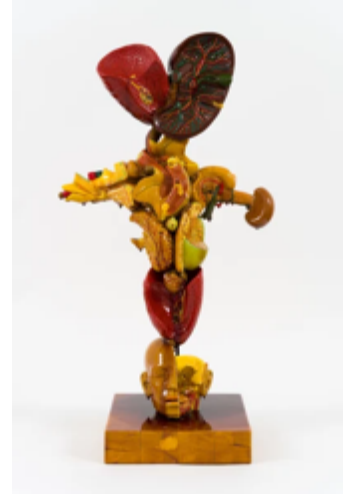
Standard et Ornement [Standard and Ornament] (Le Buisson), 2021
Plastic and bronze
19 3/4 x 19 3/4 x 23 5/8 inches (50 x 50 x 60 cm)
Edition of 3 + 1 AP
[JM1835.21]



Note:

This work stages the more complex version of complexity. Here complexity is left to the viewer. The small bronze object itself is not particularly complex, but it is an ornament. The title says ornament; it doesn't say decoration, and it doesn't say art, it says standard. There is an absent body, and therefore the evocation of a body, not only in terms of its usual seated comfort, but also at the level of the trace of its presence, in the sense that there is time which is put into the ornament, pressure. We can say that the ornament is a trace, or an imprint. And I tried at the same time to pull the piece of clay a little outwards, so as to make something that moves forward. If you will, there's immediately manifested the idea of placing an ornament on a standard chair, I think that's the most important thing. Now this idea is not mine, it comes from an Indian manufacturer of standard plastic chairs, who found an ingenious way of inserting lion heads into his chairs. But the object is essentially rooted in two types of absences, which are of a different nature.

Buborg (Le Buisson), 2022
Plastic, wood and epoxy resin
37 3/8 x 19 3/4 x 12 5/8 inches (95 x 50 x 32 cm)
[JM1887.22]



Note:

This object is a Bubu, hence a tutelary figure. In other words, it's a custom-made God. All Bubus are tailor-made Gods. I've had it with unique, single Gods! This statue is made of organ parts extracted from ten anatomical models.

Sans nom 1, 2020
Waxed reinforced concrete
10 5/8 x 29 1/2 x 15 3/4 in (27 x 75 x 40 cm)
[JM1825.20]



Note:

In *Sans nom 1* an inflatable sex doll is turned inside-out—interiorized—then filled with concrete to create an uncanny statue. The ensuing form is the immediate outcome of a solid and heavy material filling the empty shell of a figure—an incarnation of thin air. The result of the same production protocol as Moulène's *Tronches* series (2014-2017), the sculpture exists as an effigy with a distorted face and body.

This hand-crafted statue is an observer watching us from afar; it functions as a witness and sees its own interiority.

* All notes about the works from a recent interview with Jean-Luc Moulène