

Oliver Husain  
*FRENCH EXIT*  
10 May to 16 June 2018



Staged within a colossal set of International Style architecture, Jacques Tati's 1967 film *Playtime* unfolds through a cascade of choreographed incidents and precise acts of observation. In time with both camera and cast, our gaze skips between an apparently endless flow of vivid tableaux, navigating this glassy and glamorous shopping-mall world with its equally limitless possibilities. As film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum describes, a type of comic ballet ensues—one that implicates us as both viewers and performers. He writes, “Tati helps us to become a better audience by presenting us precisely with our social predicament as spectators, and then trying to show us how we might become partners in and through that experience.”

Likewise, Oliver Husain's new experimental video installation, *FRENCH EXIT*, playfully animates empty space through a series of composed and improvised arrangements. Resembling a game, the work engages a set of rules that cause dancers to move relative to soft massive volumes—a revolving glass door, an invisible energy field, a subtle cultural boundary. While pressing and dipping, stretching and shifting, curving and weaving both the dancing bodies and their observers lose track of oppositional reality. Filtered through transparent layers and split into lenticular bands, outside refracts against inside; objectivity slips into subjectivity; and individuality is interrupted while mirrored hybridity proliferates.

The strategies of representation articulated in *FRENCH EXIT* are necessary for our posterior condition. As with Tati's phantasmagorical Paris, with its “imprisoning patterns, reflections, and deceptions”, this post-industrial-modern-colonial age demands perpetual flexibility. And, since rigidity equals obsolescence, you keep spinning faster and faster until *you* blurs into *them*.