

CONCORDE

1 — 23 APRIL 2023

The Community is pleased to present a group exhibition featuring artists Anté Antoine, Morgan Corbitt, Pauline d'Andigné, Ryan De Laval, Gabriel Francis, Alfonso Gonzalez Jr., Alexander Raczka, Louis Somveille, and Wombat. Geographies extending from New York to Los Angeles, from San Francisco to Paris, the group of invited artists all engage with painterly practices, weaving together ideas of inside and outside, private and public – creating a dialogue between fine art traditions and counter-cultural forms of artmaking.

While some of the featured artists share personal connections, others are connected through a mutual set of references that characterize their work. The city functions either as a direct, physical canvas to dialogue with, or provide a loose socio-cultural and iconographical framework for the oeuvre. The main frame of reference is the painterly work in its expanded definition: the images function as anthropological and archaeological queries and surveys of the surrounding cityscape as a cultural container. The techniques are varied – some of the works are done within a time-consuming and meticulous framework and layering, while others are realized with quick strokes and graffiti-like gestures.

The work of Morgan Corbit and Alfonso Gonzalez Jr., both originally coming from Los Angeles, engage with the architecture and surfaces surrounding the West Coast. Gonzalez who lives and works in his native Los Angeles, followed and observed his father at work as a commercial sign painter while growing up. In his artistic work, Gonzalez, draws inspiration from the hand-painted signage to narrate both his personal story, while providing a comment on the notions related to labour, and different social and public surfaces across Los Angeles.

San Francisco based Morgan Corbitt works on collage-style paintings, featuring her contemplation and documentation of the surrounding cityscape. Iconographic references are either taken from her personal photos or simple observations – the artist defines herself as “an image hoarder”. For Corbitt, photography has always been a somewhat natural process: her work on canvas allows her to process the witnessed and collected images in a different (time)frame. The painterly clues, as seen in the exhibited works, such as a wrought iron gate, her mother’s hand, and a “STOP REQUEST” sign, all function as gateways to dealing with the notions of inner and outer self, and (self) protection.

The exhibition moves from the West Coast imagery to subcultural happenings, rooftops and alleys of New York. The work of NYC-based artists Ryan De Laval, Gabriel Francis and Wombat all have their background in counter-cultural art forms and punk and graffiti communities, which strongly influence their respective works. The hectic compositions and layers – both in the iconographical sense as well as in their materiality – function as an observation and commentary about the deeply embedded political and social chaos of our times. The body of works are reflective of their microcosms, and embrace contradictions – from excess to restraint, connecting therapeutic dreams and apocalyptic wastelands.

Ryan De Laval, originally coming from Oakland, works mainly with paper and painting, which are, according to the artist, “taken from unfinished dreams, where you keep waking up just trying to get bits and pieces.” The multilayered references and the use of non-traditional fine art materials, such as spray paint and scrap board, and the questioning of hierarchies between the “high” and “low” connect the artist to his native California, particularly informed by the local punk scene history as well as San Francisco’s historical Mission School art movement.



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This slippery sense of realness is also featured in the work of Gabriel Francis, whose mixed-media works on paper provide warped architectural vistas of the city and androgynous insect-like figures. Spending a lot of his time in the DIY spaces of NYC graffiti and punk subcultures, which he also documents through photography and zine-making, is an important way for him to channel his creative input.

Wombat is a Brooklyn-born artist and a notorious graffiti writer, who is presenting a new painting specifically made for this exhibition. Her work is strongly influenced by punk aesthetics, and whether it is her graffiti or works on canvas, she takes the street energies and translates the world around her the way she wants to see it – essentially what her both practices reflect.

The Paris chapter of the exhibition includes works by Pauline d'Andigné, Louis Somveille, Anté Antoine, and Alexander Raczka, featuring both paintings on canvas and sculptural works. At the core of Pauline d'Andigné's oeuvre, one can find the notions of conflict, disorder and ambivalence – the artist borrows references from popular culture and advertising images, and comments on the hypermodern environment. The forms and colours are familiar and recognizable, often going towards the excess, ending up in complex and hybrid layers.

This notion of metamorphosis, or translation, in its material and poetic meaning, is also found in the work of Polish-Italian, Saint-Denis-based artist Alexander Raczka. The outdoor environment is an essential part of his artistic process – the featured works are created using an advertising tarpaulin, a material that can be found across the city. Through a meticulous process of layering, the work transforms into new poetic, iconographic systems of communication, lingering between abstraction and figuration.

During his teenage years, French-born Anté Antoine started following and helping his plumber-father and grandfather in their work on construction sites. This environment provided the first framework for his artistic practice, as he started to paint on the walls and gather excess materials from the same sites to use for his sculptural work. Later, in 2019, Antoine started his fine arts studies at Beaux-Arts de Paris. Today, his painterly work features a mix of abstraction, impressionism, and collage, with references to working-class French traditions and patrimony, intertwining the urban and pastoral.

Multiple literary and other clues of French cultural history are also seen in the work of Louis Somveille, here seen in both larger and smaller painterly works. In addition to creating a commentary about the past, Somveille paints quotidian scenes from Paris or from the neighbouring Aubervilliers, where he lived until recently, before relocating to central Paris. Everyday observations are accompanied by a feeling of contradiction and almost of conflict, which is felt towards the surrounding city the artist finds himself in.

Concorde brings together continents and mediums. The works are evocative of the site-specificity and the surrounding urban and cultural frameworks, and united by their physical interaction with the environment. Moving from streets and roofs to the meditated work in the studio space, the work is also shared and exhibited through independent publications, art spaces, and within the punk and graffiti scenes, thus questioning the hierarchies between different forms of artmaking.

