

JEAN CURRAN  
GODARD BARDOT  
6th JUNE - 20th JULY, 2024



Founded in 2021 The Horse is an artist run contemporary art gallery in Dublin 1 that seeks to provide a platform for emerging, experimental and underrepresented art practitioners.

The Horse is delighted to be presenting the complete and unseen body of work *Godard Bardot* by Irish artist and dye-transfer printer Jean Curran.

Jean Curran is one of a handful of dye-transfer printers working in the world today and the only artist using the technique as the foundation of her practice. Curran's previous series *The Vertigo Project* (composed of 20 dye-transfer prints taken from Alfred Hitchcock's seminal 1958 film *Vertigo*) has been exhibited internationally, receiving wide acclaim, and now hangs in several important collections.

With *Godard Bardot* Curran is back, showing a new series of 13 gorgeous, handmade, dye-transfer prints created in her dark room in Co. Waterford. Taken from the original reel of Jean Luc Godard's 1963 masterpiece, *Contempt (Le Mepris)*, Curran carefully appropriates key narrative frames, laboriously works by hand in transforming them into still images, and re-frames their meaning. The results are both marvelous and provocative.

*Contempt* was the first time that Godard and Raoul Coutard (his cinematographer) had worked with Technicolor, while also shooting the film in the popular widescreen CinemaScope format. Together, they created an implosion of lush, saturated colour images in a film that has come to define the New Wave movement in cinema.

Embodying ideas of creative freedom, art, sensuality, and above all the liberty to make artistic choices based on one's own desire, *Contempt* has been described as the world's first post-modern movie.

*Cinema sets before our gaze, a world in harmony with our desires*

- André Bazin quoted in Le Mépris

While minimalist and cool in appearance, *Contempt* is robustly layered with many different classical and post-modern art quotations and, in particular, references Piet Mondrian's modern compositions and Yves Klein's monochromes. Further, Brigitte Bardot is presented as a muse-de-force, an unattainable object of perfection, a role that is questioned by Godard and highlighted by Curran's choice of frames whereby "Bardot is in charge and in control of her sexuality."

*Godard Bardot* explores the creative collaboration between these two icons of cinema and focuses on Godard's use of colour, bringing new attention to the artistry of his vision and to the potency of Bardot's sensuality. Through a process of isolating selected frames, Curran creates an edit of luminous, handmade dye-transfer prints, made with the full consent and support of Jean Luc Godard, Brigitte Bardot, and StudioCanal.

Many of the frames Curran selects depict Bardot as a typical art historical reclining nude with a twist: her body appears abstracted from a distance. Remarkably, this is the first time Bardot allowed these nudes to be depicted in such a manner. Curran's transformative act of appropriation invites the viewer to consider *Contempt* in a new light, from a contemporary perspective.

*Godard Bardot* is open until July 20th.

Hi-res files of all images (including photo of the artist) are available on request.

For all enquiries please contact Nicholas O'Neill -

nico@thehosedublin.xyz

© All rights reserved, Jean Luc Godard, Brigitte Bardot, StudioCanal.

## ABOUT THE DYE-TRANSFER PROCESS

Jean Curran is one of the rare artists today to master the mythical and fastidious photography development process called dye-transfer. Until the 1970s, dye-transfer, famous for its precise, rich and stable colour, was used only in commercial printing - fashion and advertising. In 1976, MoMA in New York held a major exhibition of dye-transfer works by photographer William Eggleston, the first colour photography exhibition ever held by the museum. It was a quiet revolution and today, William Eggleston's dye-transfer prints are amongst the most prized photographs on the art market. Since then, the production of the material necessary for dye-transfer printing (paper, ink, chemicals) was discontinued, and only a finite amount still exists today.

## JEAN CURRAN

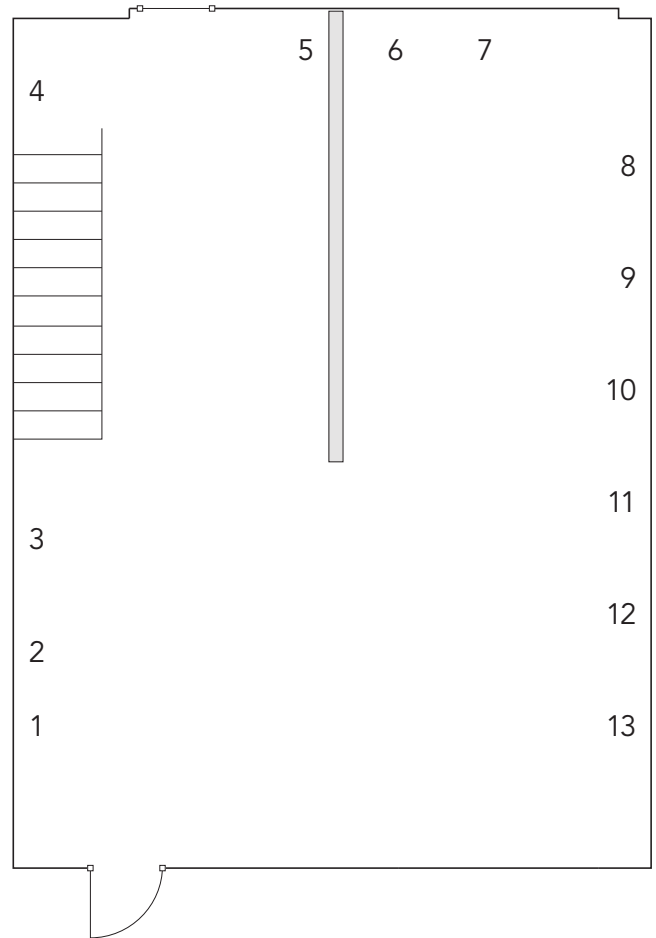
Waterford native Jean Curran (b.1981) began her professional career as a photo journalist, working in Ireland and Africa, before becoming a fine art practitioner. After an extensive apprenticeship in the near-extinct process of dye-transfer printing, Curran became interested in the re-contextualisation of early colour films, and of re-presenting them as still-frame photographic images. Her previous series *The Vertigo Project*, was her first exhibition of work created in this manner.

The process by which Curran makes her prints is deeply labour-intensive and the time, technical knowledge and attention that she bestows on each colour print, is similar to a painter or sculptor's practice. Curran's transformation of these movie frames gives us a chance to re-consider her chosen source films, but also to think about photography and cinema, their technological transitions, and the myriad interconnections between film, cinema history, and painting.

## NICHOLAS O'NEILL

Nicholas O'Neill is a writer, film producer and curator from Dublin, Ireland. As a film critic he wrote for In Dublin, The Irish Times and The Sunday Press, his producing credits include *Micha*, *Crushproof* and *I Could Read the Sky*. He was Curator and Programmer of Shorts at The Telluride Film Festival, Colorado until recently. He now joins The Horse as a Curator.

- 1 *Camille!*  
 2023  
 dye-transfer print  
 edition of 10  
 Paper 20" x 24"  
 Image area 8.5" x 20.5"
  
- 2 *Didn't You Hear Me Calling?*  
 2023  
 dye-transfer print  
 edition of 10  
 Paper 20" x 24"  
 Image area 8.5" x 20.5"
  
- 3 *Camille!*  
 2023  
 dye-transfer print  
 edition of 10  
 Paper 20" x 24"  
 Image area 8.5" x 20.5"
  
- 4 *What Kept You?*  
 2023  
 dye-transfer print  
 edition of 10  
 Paper 20" x 24"  
 Image area 8.5" x 20.5"



- 5 *Do You Like me?*  
 2023  
 dye-transfer print  
 edition of 10  
 Paper 20" x 24"  
 Image area 8.5" x 20.5"
  
- 6 *Untitled*  
 2023  
 dye-transfer print  
 edition of 10  
 Paper 20" x 24"  
 Image area 8.5" x 20.5"
  
- 7 *Totally, Tenderly, Tragically*  
 2023  
 dye-transfer print  
 edition of 10  
 Paper 20" x 24"  
 Image area 8.5" x 20.5"
  
- 8 *What's wrong!*  
 2023  
 dye-transfer print  
 edition of 10  
 Paper 20" x 24"  
 Image area 8.5" x 20.5"
  
- 9 *You're the one who's changed*  
 2023  
 dye-transfer print  
 edition of 10  
 Paper 20" x 24"  
 Image area 8.5" x 20.5"
  
- 10 *A Tender Smile*  
 2023  
 dye-transfer print  
 edition of 10  
 Paper 20" x 24"  
 Image area 8.5" x 20.5"
  
- 11 *Untitled*  
 2023  
 dye-transfer print  
 edition of 10  
 Paper 20" x 24"  
 Image area 8.5" x 20.5"
  
- 12 *We Used to Live in a Cloud of Unawareness*  
 2023  
 dye-transfer print  
 edition of 10  
 Paper 20" x 24"  
 Image area 8.5" x 20.5"
  
- 13 *Untitled*  
 2023  
 dye-transfer print  
 edition of 10  
 Paper 20" x 24"  
 Image area 8.5" x 20.5"