

T H E     A R T I S T     R O O M

V I C T O R     B O U L L E T  
D U N D E E     M A R M A L A D E

4 T H   O C T O B E R   -   1 S T   N O V E M B E R   2 0 2 4

2 0   G R E A T   C H A P E L   S T R E E T

V I C T O R B O U L L E T  
D U N D E E M A R M A L A D E

*My practice uncovers hypocrisy and hidden facts. This is all subjective, of course. I'm not trying to achieve some aesthetically pleasing utopia. I don't make art for pleasure or survival.* – Victor Boulet

The Artist Room presents two consecutive solo exhibitions of work by Victor Boulet (b.1969, Oslo), the artist's first solo presentation in London. *Dundee Marmalade* (4 October–1 November) will present oil paintings on canvas made in the UK between 2013–24. *Punt e Mes* (6 November–15 November) will include a body of unseen drawings on paper, sculptures constructed from domestic materials, and new paintings made in Rome.

Rooted in painting, Victor Boulet's expansive and obsessive practice extends into drawing, sculpture, photography, publishing and writing. Bridging lived experience and acute social observation, often distilling some form of violent interaction witnessed in the world, Boulet's paintings are an attempt to surface out of these experiences, barricade against swarms of information that seek to suffocate, and reject a numbness present in our contemporary condition.

Situated deftly in the margins of society, Boulet's work deals with the mundanity and violence of everyday life, consciously channelling the perennial physical compulsions of humans. A clear and robust art historical education backbones the work and yet, unlike artists who imitate and recreate, Victor stores this information within his subconscious, allowing him to construct paintings that are simultaneously heavy in their referencing, yet light and instantaneous in their manifestation.

Boulet's work encompasses the agglomeration of European geographies and social cultures that makes up his personal identity. Born and raised in Oslo to a Norwegian mother and Scottish father, Boulet moved to London in 1997 before moving between Berlin and Paris. After living through late gentrification of the Le Marais district, Boulet left the Parisian art world in 2014 and relocated to inner-city Liverpool until 2024, before moving to rural Padbury where he now lives and works.

Boulet's self inflicted reclusion has allowed him to commandeer a prolific practice, one which sustains repetition and continual destruction: objects, forms and bodies are painted over and over, destroyed and re-painted. The paintings therefore appear unable to situate themselves, continuing to reincarnate, until some form of truth is caught and held on the canvas. His bodies of work – including those on view – often remain in forced hibernation for many years before being shown. Boulet treats these works as captive living entities, as though they must prove first to themselves that they deserve freedom. Some are afforded escape, some are not.

In works on view including the *COUNTING FRIENDS*, *ICH HABE GENUG* and *LETZTE RELIGIOSE ARBEIT* series', forms are built like flesh atop the canvas. The painted illusion does not pull us in; rather we fall backwards as forms imbued with a rage of inaccessibility erupt towards us, penetrating a culture that has become too neatly packaged to handle the level of rawness that Boulet is able to navigate.

In his poem 'Le Bougnat' featured in his 2021 publication 'Toxteth Error Lad', Boulet proclaims 'Silence, doubt and eat me'. It is unclear whether Boulet is asking this of viewers, or, if his paintings ask this of him. Established throughout his practice is a sense of cyclical engorged feasting, rotating between artist, painting and viewer. It is this demanding and charged energy that allows the works to surface.

Directly utilising working class aesthetics by borrowing imagery from contemporary household phenomena such as Monster Munch, Extra chewing gum and Fairy Liquid, Boulet pivots the works aggressively away from their art historical antecedents, firmly entrenching them within the mundanity and reality of the contemporary experience, while forging a devious and unexpected collision of contrasting aesthetics. In doing so, Boulet *Trojan horses*' working class experience into the art world in a way that avoids reductive tokenism. Commendably navigating a process that is rarely successful, the range of aesthetics that compile Boulet's broader, total aesthetic engages audiences that are often excluded from the art world. Boulet and his practice and personality hold a self-imposed air of mystery and enigma. A true artist's artist, Boulet operates with complete aesthetic and emotional freedom

This landmark double exhibition will spotlight the depth and range of Boulet's unique artistic practice, creating an environment to sympathise with the artist's fascination with the horrors, ironies and idiosyncrasies of everyday life.

i n f o @ t h e a r t i s t r o o m . c o m  
+ 4 4 ( 0 ) 2 0 3 3 7 2 2 8 8 4  
@ t h e a r t i s t r o o m g a l l e r y

