

GUILLAUME DÉNERVAUD

Holistic Equations

SEPTEMBER 19–NOVEMBER 7, 2025



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September 19–November 7, 2025

Every year, when the light tilts toward orange and the air turns dry, I feel the call. It is not a sound but a pulse — steady, deep — that pushes me into the sky.

Tiny crystals have gathered on my shell during the flight, glinting between the dark patches and the metallic sheen of my wings.

I push my way through the dry, blade-sharp reeds that rustle like paper, moving toward the entrance of the abandoned manufactory.

Perched for a moment on the old watchtower, I scan the deserted horizon in every direction. As far as I can see, metal structures disintegrate into bark-like fragments, as if steel were slowly turning back into soil.

At my feet, the building's skeleton cracks the concrete and weeps oxides in shades of red and ochre. Further on, deep retention basins surround a dozen spherical tanks. A network of pipelines ties them to the extinguished burners of the plant to the west.

At last, I find the opening: a small gap in a ventilation pipe leading to the heart. There, we gather, pressed close, and sink into the long lethargy of diapause.

Our still bodies seem to vanish into the darkness, yet the air holds our imprint: invisible threads of pheromones slide along the walls, seep into the pores of the metal.



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Static Rooftoppers*, 2025
Oil, pencil on canvas
200 × 130 cm; DENE/P 17



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Holistic Equations*, 2025
Exhibition view, Galerie Gregor Staiger, Milan



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Itchy Throat (Vapors)*, 2025
Distemper, oil, and pencil on canvas
450 × 60 cm (5 Panels: 90 × 60 cm); DENE/P 20



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Itchy Throat (Vapors)*, 2025

Detail



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Itchy Throat (Vapors)*, 2025

Detail



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Holistic Equations*, 2025
Exhibition view, Galerie Gregor Staiger, Milan



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Holistic Equations*, 2025
Exhibition view, Galerie Gregor Staiger, Milan



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Holistic Equations*, 2025
Exhibition view, Galerie Gregor Staiger, Milan



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Entangled Talk*, 2025
Ink on paper
30.5 × 23 cm; DENE/WP 10



Guillaume Dénervaud, *A Shadow of Suspicion*, 2025
Ink on paper
30.5 × 23 cm; DENE/WP 11



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Holistic Equations*, 2025
Exhibition view, Galerie Gregor Staiger, Milan



Guillaume Dénervaud, *The Vast Spine*, 2025
Ink on paper
30.5 × 23 cm; DENE/WP 12



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Holistic Equations*, 2025
Exhibition view, Galerie Gregor Staiger, Milan



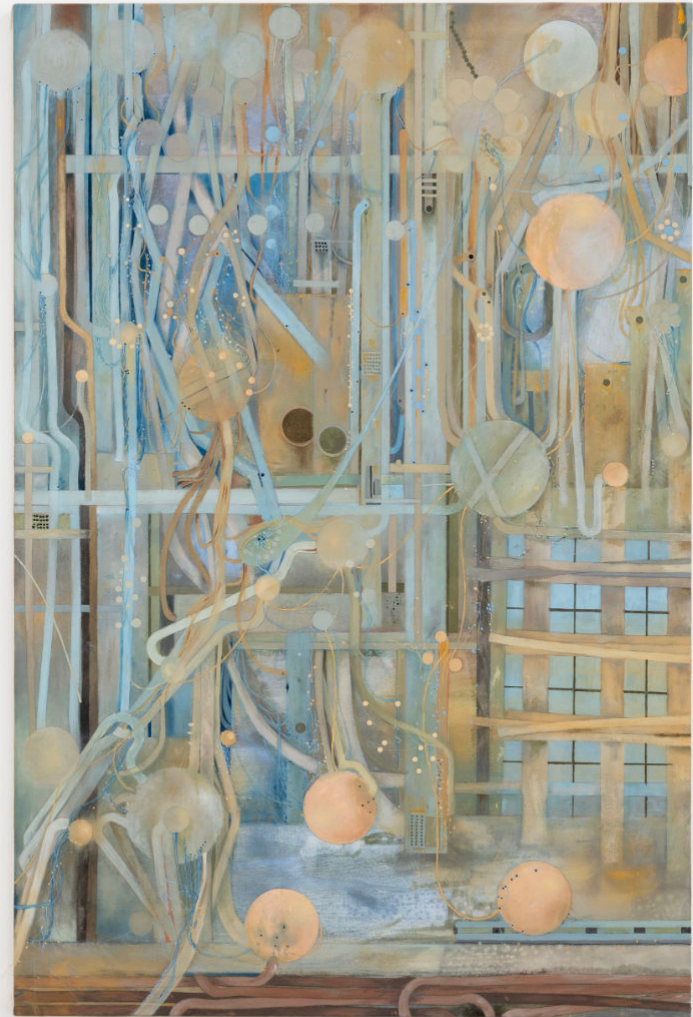
Guillaume Dénervaud, *Some New Seeds*, 2025
Ink on paper
30.5 × 23 cm; DENE/WP 9



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Holistic Equations*, 2025
Exhibition view, Galerie Gregor Staiger, Milan



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Programmed Cells*, 2025
Ink on paper
30.5 × 23 cm; DENE/WP 13



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Holistic Equations*, 2025
Exhibition view, Galerie Gregor Staiger, Milan

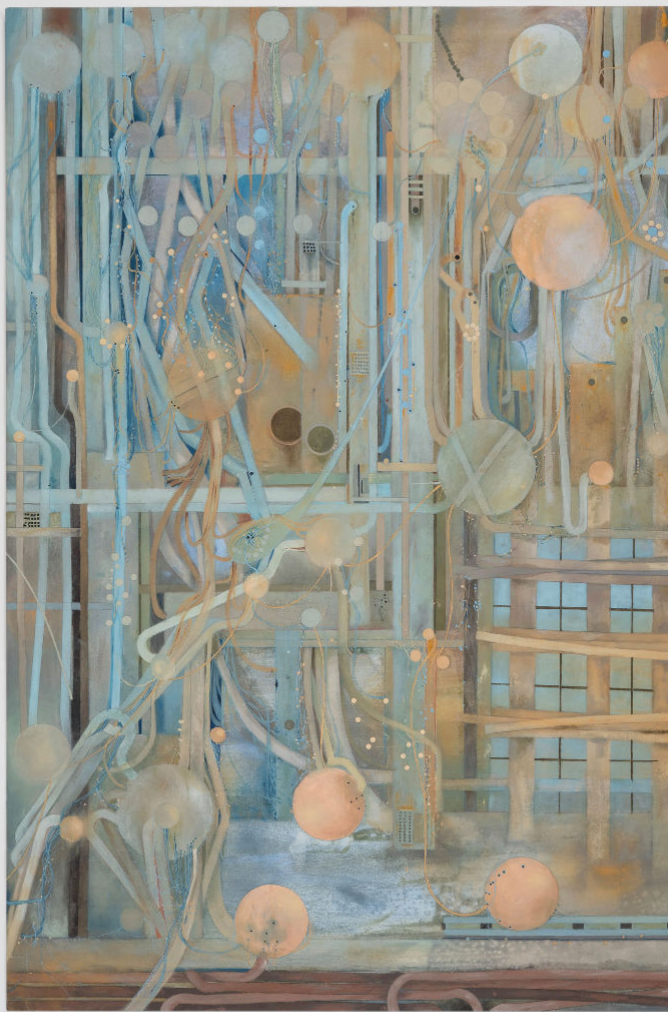


Guillaume Dénervaud, *Grainfield Loop*, 2025
Tempera, oil, and pencil on canvas
120 × 80 cm; DENE/P 18

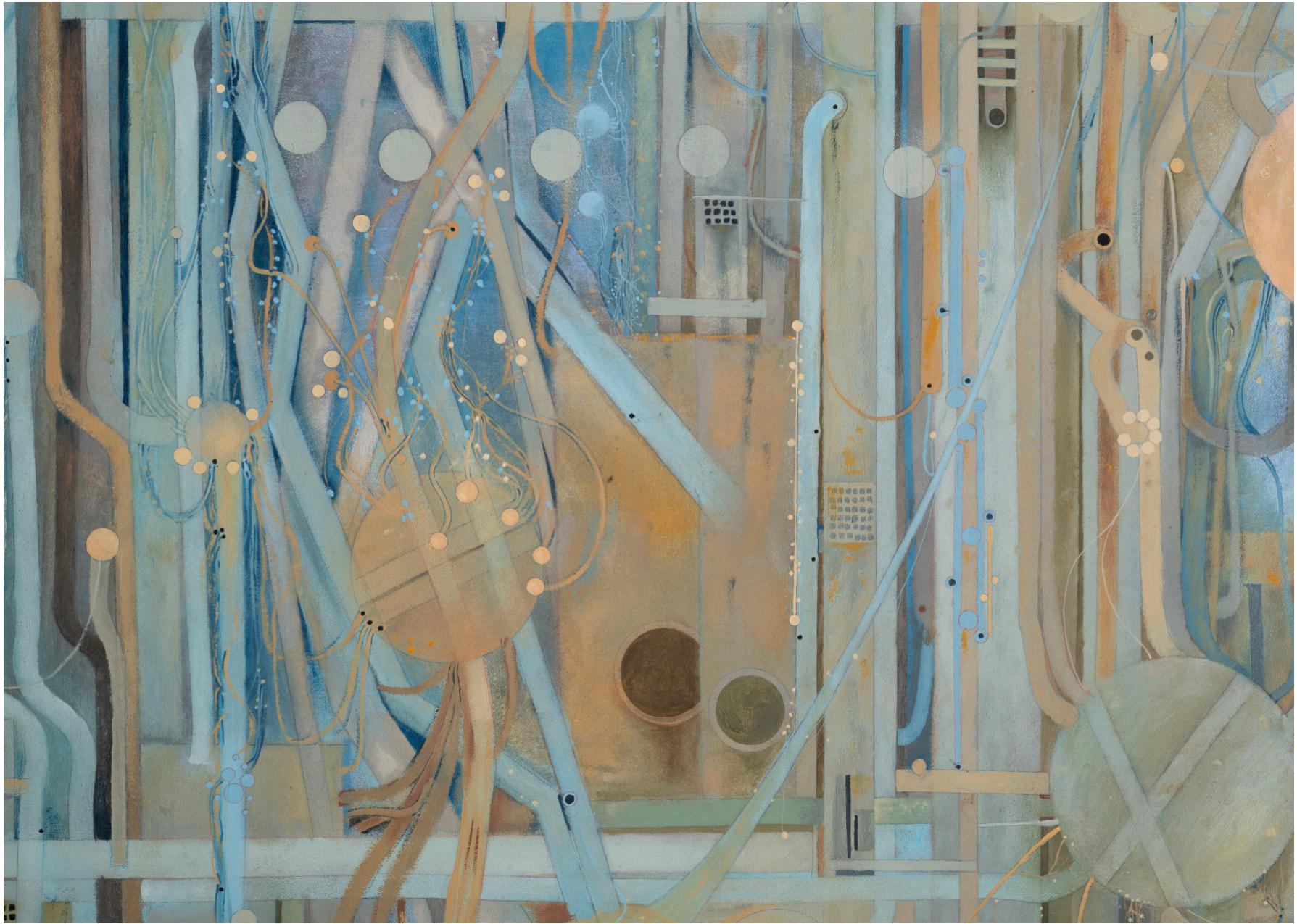


Guillaume Dénervaud, *Grainfield Loop*, 2025

Detail



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Conform Unit*, 2025
Tempera, oil, and pencil on canvas
120 × 80 cm; DENE/P 18



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Conform Unit*, 2025

Detail



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Holistic Equations*, 2025
Exhibition view, Galerie Gregor Staiger, Milan



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Storage, Loss and Sensivity* (1 -14), 2025
Irrigation hoses, pigments, and casein
Dimensions variable (14 elements, 8 × 1'000 cm each); DENE/S 7

GUILLAUME DÉNERVAUD

1987, Fribourg, Switzerland
Lives and works in Paris

Guillaume Dénervaud renders dense forests of organic and engineered forms using stencils and templates he has collected over the years. These templates include traditional architectural French curves and various ellipses, as well as branded stencils used by real estate agents and furniture designers to sketch diverse industrial elements: the curve of a wall, the shape of bathroom fixtures, plumbing, electrical wiring, etc. As CAD has made these tools mostly obsolete for commercial use, Dénervaud redeploys them to create various visions of the future built on the remnants of today's industrialized society. These new anticipatory scenarios of dystopian scapes seem more like disrupted habitats than deliberate plans, with mutant flora, overgrown invasive species, rusting motor parts collecting silt in lakebeds, and living tissue merging with electronic circuitry. Flowing shapes reminiscent of parasitic plants or cancerous cells proliferate. Dénervaud infuses the systems with life by using ink and oil paint made from plants, algae, and minerals: the colors don't only represent nature, they are derived from nature itself, crushed and dissolved and stirred.

Guillaume Dénervaud (b. 1987, Fribourg, Switzerland) lives and works in Paris. He studied at the École des arts appliqués, Geneva and at HEAD, Geneva. Dénervaud's solo shows include 'Oxyde Ballad', Antenna Space, Shanghai (2024); 'Orphaned Wells', Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zurich (2024); 'Ozoned Station', Swiss Institute, New York (2023); 'Synthetic Splinter', Bel Ami, Los Angeles (2023); 'Surv'eye', Centre D'édition Contemporain (CEC), Geneva (2021); 'Zone Furtive', Balice Hertling, Paris (2019); 'Inversens Clinic', Alienze, Lausanne (2019); 'Spectrolia Corporatio'n, Hard Hat, Geneva (2018). Group exhibitions include 'The Abstract Future', Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles (2025), 'Crumbling The Antiseptic Beauty', Fondation d'entreprise Pernod Ricard, Paris (2024); 'La main-pleur', Fri Art Kunsthalle, Fribourg (2022); 'Des corps, des écritures', Musée d'art Moderne de Paris (2022); 'Aquarium', Maison Populaire, Montreuil (2022); 'Les formes du transfert', Les Magasins Généraux, Paris (2021); 'Emblazoned World', Bel Ami, Los Angeles (2021); 'Le sain ennui', BQ Gallery, Berlin (2021); 'Your Friends and Neighbors', High Art, Paris (2020); 'L'Oranger', LiveInYourHead, Geneva (2017). Dénervaud participated in the Swiss Institute residency program, New York (2021). Public collections: ICA Miami, MAMCO, Geneva and the Musée d'art Moderne de Paris, amongst others.



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Trailer Orbit*, 2025
Casein, oil, pencil on canvas
200 × 130 cm; DENE/P 16



Guillaume Dénervaud: as beautiful as post- apocalyptic can be

by Samuel Haitz

*Guillaume Dénervaud forms a delicate interpretation
of a post-apocalyptic scenery, managing the effects
of our carelessness towards our environment*

Besides having read George Orwell's *1984* (1949) once, I seldom engage with science fiction media—my knowledge is strictly limited, and hence contains a variety of utopian and dystopian narratives. The work of Swiss contemporary artist Guillaume Dénervaud is deeply influenced by the literary genre, sitting somewhere within the spectrum of futuristic narratives. In his paintings, which transcend the abstract and the figurative, the artist simultaneously evokes microscopic views and the sensation of organic life as it takes back the planet. In this post-apocalyptic world, plant matter overgrows that which was made and subsequently destroyed by the humans of the Anthropocene.

In Guillaume Dénervaud's current exhibition, *Ozoned Station* (2023), at Swiss Institute, New York, we encounter six of these paintings, meticulously rendered in pencil, tempera, and oil on linen. His technique uses architectural drawing stencils, which are a relic from pre-computer times. Forms which are open to interpretation as flowers, fireworks, fan and windmill-like shapes, planets, and neural networks sprawl densely over these canvases. The paintings' earthy yet vivid tones are derived from Dénervaud's use of natural pigments, won from flora, fauna, and minerals, and which are spread in translucent layers, the flatness with which paint is applied here seeming to refer to a method of drawing rather than "actual" painting.



Installation view, Guillaume Dénervaud, "Ozoned Station," Swiss Institute, New York, 2023. Image: Daniel Pérez, Swiss Institute. Courtesy of the artist and Bel Ami, Los Angeles.

The task of discussing Guillaume Dénervaud's work within the strictures of the discourse on contemporary painting is complicated by his vast arsenal of techniques and references. Though he compares his process of diluting Cassel brown pigments obtained from lignite mines to using Van Dyck brown, the unstable bituminous coal-based colour used by the eponymous Flemish Baroque master and his peer Peter Paul Rubens, he does not excise directly from their technique. "I did a lot of research about historic and natural pigments," he explains, continuing, "the ground of my paintings is prepared with a mixture of rabbit skin glue and a grey-green mineral pigment which dries to create a very absorbent painting surface ... I like to contrast a technique which could be considered archaic, even obsolete, like tempera or casein, with subjects linked to industrialisation or the idea of an anthropic nature." Dénervaud's works function in the singular ecosystem of his oeuvre. His paintings are not *trendy*, but then again, they do not feel old, and while they are as beautiful as post-apocalyptic scenery can be, it would be imprecise to call these canvases "decorative." This is an "ambivalent asymmetry," in the artist's terms. Feigning categorisation, Dénervaud is not easily described as contemporary or even as *un-contemporary*—the elusive, genreless charm of these canvases is what triggers my simultaneous interest.



Guillaume Dénervaud, *Volatility Orb* 1, 2023, blown glass, light bulb, electrical cable. Image: Daniel Pérez, Swiss Institute. Courtesy of the artist and Bel Ami, Los Angeles.

The presentation at Swiss Institute also features three framed drawings executed in China ink which expand on the subjects of his paintings to almost comic ends. (One of them, *Whisper Something*, 2022 features two alien-like figures whose corpses Guillaume Dénervaud has incorporated with an interconnected, almost tangling system of hoses and tubes.) The walls of the exhibition space have been treated with paint containing bituminous coal resulting in a patina which invokes dusty residue left by industrialized production and the pollution that comes with it. "This gesture is more related to painting than the works on canvas," the artist explains. Regarding the S-shaped steel sculpture (*InOut Capacities*, 2023), Dénervaud is open about its potential modular, social function. Another ceiling fan-shaped sculpture (*Please note, they are fading*, 2023) translates one of the artist's preferred painterly motifs to the three-dimensional plane, doubling down on the (post-)industrial mood of the show. The most surprising, fresh pieces can be found in the hallway leading to the exhibition space. For *Volatility Orb* 1, *Changeability Orb* 2, and *Levity Orb* 3, all 2023, Dénervaud hung three handblown glass orbs in different colours, inadvertently forming a miniature solar system. One professes to float; the two others are more *fatigué*, stuck in mid-air, perched against the wall. Each of the lightbulb-equipped orbs provides an eerie glow and a psychedelic feel to the hallway, an effect detectable throughout the presentation.



Guillaume Dénervaud, detail of *Mr Miles Adjusts the Filaments of the Lantern*, 2023, oil, tempera, and pencil on linen. Image: Daniel Pérez, Swiss Institute. Courtesy of the artist and Bel Ami, Los Angeles.

With *Ozoned Station*, Guillaume Dénervaud forms a delicate interpretation of an abandoned post-apocalyptic scenery, managing the threatening effects of our carelessness towards our environment while avoiding adopting the moralistic tone employed by many of his peers. Instead, his work seems to propose a liveable outcome for generations to come, suggesting the possibilities of ecological recovery, or more guiltlessly, the ability of nature to adapt positively.

Further regarding adaptation, Guillaume Dénervaud's practice is not characterized by significant aesthetic shifts but by continuous evolution. One step leads clearly to another. Rooted in his drawing practice, Dénervaud calmly branches out into new formats, techniques, and even dimensions. While his drawings do not come off as precursory sketches, there is clear evidence of their influence on the visual language he applies toward working in other mediums. The artist maintains his position clearly; "I can draw without a precise project in mind," he says, adding "which is impossible when making a sculpture, for example." Revealing the two halves of his philosophy in general, he explains how he thinks through the lens of drawing during the conception period of an exhibition, as well as after a show has opened, "as a form of archiving." One could dismiss this strategy of endless repetition and variation as too boring, or too slow for the lightning-quick art world, yet in the case of Dénervaud, it feels not derivative, or self-plagiaristic, but convinced and sincere. This constant recursion emphasizes the inherent notion of a "practice" as precise and reiterative.

GUILLAUME DÉNERVAUD

1987, Fribourg, Switzerland

Lives and works in Paris

EDUCATION

2016

Master of Arts HES-SO in Fine Arts, HEAD Geneva

2014

Bachelor of Arts HES-SO in Fine Arts, HEAD Geneva

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2026

Kunsthalle Friart, Fribourg (upcoming)

Antenna Space, Hong Kong (upcoming)

2025

Galerie Gregor Staiger, Milan

2024

'Oxyde Ballad', Antenna Space, Shanghai

'Thulite: Chapter II', Villa Atrata, Paris

'Thulite: Chapter I', Villa Atrata, Angles-sur-l'Anglin

'Orphaned Wells', Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zurich

2023

'Ozoned Station', Swiss Institute, New York,

'Synthetic Splinter', Bel Ami, Los Angeles

2021

'Surv'Eye', Centre d'édition contemporaine (CEC), Geneva

2020

'Strata', La Cristallerie, Saint-Louis

2019

'Zone Furtive', Balice Hertling, Paris

'Inversens Clinic', Alienze, Lausanne

2018

'Spectrolia Corporation', Hard Hat, Geneva

2016

'Haustorium', tunnel SLCE 45, Geneva

2015

'Halterozzz', Zabriskie Point, Geneva

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2025

'The Abstract Future', Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles

2024

'Le MAMCO, de Memoire', MAMCO, Geneva

'Toward the Celestial: ICA Miami's Collection at 10 Years', ICA, Miami

'Crumbling The Antiseptic Beauty', Fondation d'entreprise Pernod Ricard, Paris

2023

'Don't Worry, This Will Be Over Soon', Galerie Gregor Staiger, Milan

2022

'La main-pleur', Fri Art Kunsthalle, Fribourg

'Des corps, des écritures', Musée d'art Moderne de Paris, Paris

'Aquarium', Maison Populaire, Montreuil

'Les formes du transfert', Les Magasins Généraux, Paris

2021

'Emblazoned World', Bel Ami, Los Angeles, CA

'Le sain ennui', BQ Gallery, Berlin

2020

'Your Friends and Neighbors', High Art, Paris, FR

'Stay Safe, Shivers Only', Chantemanche

'A Table for 50', Galerie PCP, Paris

2019

'Speculation & Extinction', Klima, Salon Normandy, Paris

'Le ciel, l'eau, les dauphins, la vierge, les flics',, Forde, Geneva

2018

'La Lampada', Circuit - Centre d'art contemporain, Lausanne

Swiss Art Awards, Art Basel, Basel

'Do Mi No La Ti Do', Riverside, Bern

'Cave Panorama', with Adrien Chevalley, Hit, Geneva

2017

'Utopias Are More or Less Fantastic', Nicolas Krupp, Basel

'L'oranger', LiveInYourHead, Geneva

2016

'Artagon', Passage de Retz, Paris

'Omni / Snippet', with Jérôme Baccaglio, Silicon Malley, Lausanne

2015

'Melting Pot', Nicolas Krupp, Basel

'Duhalo', with Adrien Chevalley, M J, Geneva

2014

'Accrochage 2014', Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne

'448', Circuit - Centre d'art contemporain, Lausanne

2013

'Holes In The Walls', Fri Art Kunsthalle, Fribourg

'Nolocal Noglobal', Wallriss, Fribourg

'Ravelling Généalogique', Marbriers 4, Geneva

2012

'Monstre', Hard Hat, Geneva

2011

'The Room', Ex-EPA, Vevey

'Titan', Forde, Geneva

2010

'Float Over The Mist', la Dépendance, Renen

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Collection du Fond Cantonal d'Art Contemporain (FCAC), Geneva

Paris Museum of Modern Art, Paris

MAMCO, Geneva

Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, Paris

Fond Municipal d'Art Contemporain (FMAC), Geneva

Collection of the City of Fribourg, Fribourg

BNP Paribas Switzerland, Zurich

GRANTS AND NOMINATIONS

2021

Swiss Institute residency, New York

2019

Fondation d'entreprise Hermès residency, La Cristallerie Saint-Louis

2017

New Heads– Fondation BNP Paribas Art Awards, Geneva

2016

Bourses Déliées, Fond Cantonal d'Art Contemporain (FCAC), Geneva

2014

Bourses culturelles, Fondation Leenaards, Lausanne

2012

Cité Internationale des Arts residency, Paris

PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

2021

Fumée Sombres, Centre d'édition contemporaine (CEC), Geneva

2020

Cahier de résidence, Actes Sud / Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, Arles

2019

Klima magazine, Paris

Anstésie, self published zine in collab. with David Douard, Paris, FR

Zone Furtive, Tsar Editions, Vevey, CH

Haustorium, SAV Editions, Geneva

2017

L'oranger, Head Editions, Geneva

2014

Draisine Furtive, Tsar Editions, Vevey