

Heurtebise

Laura Benson, Johanna Hedva, Jacopo Mazzetti,
Jessica Luostarinen and Angelo Iodice

DES
BAINS

curated by Riccardo Greco

2 - 31 May, 2026

Private View: Friday, 1 May, 18:00 - 20:00

DES BAINS is pleased to present *Heurtebise*, a group exhibition curated by Riccardo Greco, featuring works by Laura Benson, Johanna Hedva, Angelo Iodice, Jessica Luostarinen and Jacopo Mazzetti.

Taking its title from the androgynous and enigmatic figure of the chauffeur-angel in *Orphée* by Jean Cocteau, *Heurtebise*, gloved and discreet, facilitates passage through mirrors, treating them not as surfaces but as permeable portals. The exhibition unfolds within this logic of transit, as a space in which bodies, objects and images are held in states of latent tremor, suspension and return.

Rather than staging Surrealism as a visual language, the exhibition approaches it as a condition of passage, historically shaped as much by its omissions as by its forms. In this sense, it gestures toward submerged genealogies of the movement, traceable in works such as *Dark Spring* by Unica Zürn or the unfinished film *The Witch's Cradle* by Maya Deren, in which Surrealism unfolds not as spectacle but as a space of interiority and embodied knowledge, a more intimate and subterranean line that both traverses and displaces its more canonical formulations.

Within the exhibition, matter appears in states of instability. It condenses until it becomes a passage, structures both support and wound, and objects accumulate as carriers of memory rather than fixed meaning. The body is never fully present nor entirely absent, but persists through processes of fragmentation, concealment and recomposition.

Operativity emerges as process, activated through repetition, containment and gesture. Forms suggest protection while simultaneously exposing vulnerability; containers become sites of capture as much as preservation. Authorship loosens, allowing the works to remain open to manipulation, displacement and transformation over time. Anatomical metallic Venuses, shell memoirs, napkins from a phantom banquet present themselves as portraits of silent figures.

Voluble forms coagulate into structures that oscillate between relic and apparition. A velvet tower rises as an ambiguous signal, at once refuge and device of capture, traversed by a restrained vitality that unsettles its stillness. Elsewhere, a bouquet emerges from a rectilinear head, surfacing from an already compromised matter in which blossoming does not redeem but insists as a venefic excess, holding within it a promise of disintegration. A blackened hand supports small votive flames, not in an act of devotion but of consumption, a minimal altar in which transformation unfolds as a slow, deliberate combustion.

Heurtebise does not resolve these tensions but sustains them, proposing the exhibition as a space of continuous negotiation. Here, unease is not an event but a condition, a state of suspension in which the visible and the invisible, the material and the immaterial, remain in constant exchange.

Thursday - Saturday
11am — 6pm

mvb@desbains.co.uk

20 Great Portland St,
London, W1W 8QR

Laura Benson (b. 1997, Birmingham, AL) is a multidisciplinary artist and jewelry maker. She received a BFA in drawing from the University of Alabama in Birmingham in 2019 before completing her MFA in painting and drawing at the University of Colorado Boulder in 2023. Through a variety of mediums, some of which include printmaking, spun cotton, soldering and metalcasting, Benson's artwork is fixated on the surreal and cyclical elements of storytelling. Focusing on themes and archetypes of folklore and religious mythology, she works to express personal sentiments while simultaneously calling upon archaic collective experiences. Selected exhibitions include presentations at Soho Revue (London), SET Woolwich (London), and The Valley (Taos)

Johanna Hedva (b. 1984, Los Angeles, CA, USA; lives and works in LA, USA and Berlin, Germany) is a contemporary artist, writer, and musician. Across visual art, performance, critical writing, fiction and music, their work deals with ecstasy as much as abjection; erotics as much as disintegration; death, illness, and disability, as much as mysticism, ritual, and political activism. They are the author of the 2018 novel *On Hell*, and *Minerva the Miscarriage of the Brain*, a collection of poetry, plays, and essays published in 2020. More recently and in 2023 *And Other Stories* published their novel *Your Love Is Not Good* and in 2024 their book of critical essays *How To Tell When We Will Die; On Pain, Disability, and Doom* was published by Hillman Grad Books.

Johanna Hedva was included in Art Review's 2025 power 100 list and their 2024 exhibition at TINA, London was selected as one of Art Forum's best shows of 2025. They are also a recipient of the 2026 United States Artist Fellowship awards. Recent solo exhibitions include *Genital Discomfort*, TINA, London, UK (2024) *If You're Reading This, I'm Already Dead*, JOAN, Los Angeles, CA (2023); *Who Listens and Learns*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford (2022); *Glut (A Superabundance of Nothing)*, online video game, Shape, UK (2021); *God Is an Asphyxiating Black Sauce*, Klosterruine, Berlin (2020) and *Reading Is Yielding*, parrhesiades, London (2019). Recent group exhibitions include *Séance: Technology of the Spirit*, Seoul Mediacity Biennale (2025); *I Want to Love Us*, Seoul Museum of Art, South Korea (2024); *Cosmos Cinema* the 14th Shanghai Biennial, Shanghai (2023); *Like Magic*, MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA (2023); *Interdependencies*, Migros Museum, Zürich (2023); *Non performing*, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Roskilde (2023); *SICK*, ŠKUC Gallery, Ljubljana (2023); *Illiberal Lives*, Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen (2023); *The Noon Sirens*, Amant Foundation, New York, NY (2022); *Kingdom of the Ill*, Museion de Bolzano, Bolzano (2022) and *YOYI! Care, Repair, Heal*, Gropius Bau, Berlin (2022).

Angelo Iodice (b. 1980, Barletta, Italy; lives and works between the Marche and Apulia regions, Italy) is a chemist, of practice working through mathematical formulas in industrialization processes and on reality to translate it alchemically into sublimated images. The certainty of the formulas expresses the attempt to explain everything where drives and irrationality would lead to other kinds of answers. Figures, while marking the rhythm of the construction of measurable abacuses – being still relegated to the island of representation — open in their sublimable form to the field of transcendental subjectivity, to explain the imponderable" His most recent work is *Cosmogonia*, an artist's book printed in Venice in January 2026, created following the site-specific project *Superhost*, Cisternino, Puglia (2025). It is a special edition of 50 copies in total, each of which is embellished with a denim variant handmade by the artist, featuring fluorescent stars hand-sewn onto the fabric, thus making each copy unique. The book contains texts by Like a Little Disaster and a cameo by Giancarlo Norese.

The recent Angelo Iodice 's solo exhibitions include *Non è strano che si possa dormire, mentre la luna attraversa il cielo?* curated by Roberto Cuoghi winner of Pino Pascali Prize, Ex Chiesetta, Polignano a Mare (BA) (2025); *Altare dell' ammonite* partnership with Simeg marmi, Nomade Gallery Project, Palazzo Granafai, Sternatia (LE) (2025); *Praticare il riverbero*, Centrale Fotografia, Fano (2023); *Pietra Liquida*, MURec, Recanati (2022) and for The Blank Contemporary Art, Bergamo (2019); *Del Tempo e degli specchi*, TOMAV, Moresco (FM) (2019).

Recent group exhibitions include *Agata on the road*, Fon Art Gallery, Catania (2026); *Superhost*, Cisternino (2025); *Play dead (II)*, KORA, Castrignano de' Greci (2024); *I would prefer not to*, Ultrastudio with Zimei Foundation, Pescara (2024); *Agata*, Oelle Foundation, Catania (2022), Riaperture Festival finalist, Ferrara (2022); Dino Zoli Foundation, Forlì (2021); *Transatlantico* partnership with Palazzo Monti, Mana Contemporary, Jersey City (2021); *Pazzo Palazzo*, Palazzo Monti, Brescia (2021) (permanent); *Le forme dell'attesa*, Bottari Lattes Foundation, Torino (2018), London Art Fair (2017); Art Prize CBM finalist, Torino (2017); *Aliquid*, Gino Monti Gallery, Ancona (2017); *PLAY*, Fotografia Modena Foundation, Modena (2017); Matteo Olivero Prize finalist, Amleto Bertoni Foundation, Saluzzo (2017).

Jacopo Mazzetti (b. 1987, Milan; lives and works between Athens and Milan). His artistic practice unfolds as a form of cosmic archaeology, tracing ancestral echoes while projecting possible futures. Working across different media, he creates lyrical and metaphysical environments that seek to dissolve spatial and temporal constraints, refining the viewer's perceptual sensitivity and intuition, understood as an active and integral presence within the exhibition space. Characterised by an alchemical materiality and a post-anthropocentric vision, his work explores notions of circular time, psychic androgyny, and intergenerational exchange. By staging intimate constellations that foster revelatory states of consciousness, his practice invites access to a broader, more cyclical horizon of being.

Since 2013, he has exhibited internationally, including at the Centre d'Art Contemporain (Geneva), Felix (Los Angeles), Fitzpatrick Gallery (Paris), Basel Social Club (Basel), and Beau Travail (Stockholm). In 2018, he founded Octagon, an exhibition space and platform based in Milan.

Jessica Luostarinen (b. 1993, Finland; lives and works in London) is a painter working primarily in oil. Her work explores protection, vulnerability, estrangement and the relationship between inner emotional states and outward form. Using a restrained, often monochromatic palette, she creates interconnected series that move between still life and figuration. Through repetition, cropping and subtle shifts in form, her paintings create a tension between intimacy and distance, invitation and unease.

Recent exhibitions include *Studio Lazcano*, Mexico City (2025); *Not A Threat A Promise* at Shipton Gallery, London (2025); the opening exhibition at Georgina Pounds Gallery, Mexico City (2026); *Kati Horna + her friends* at Georgina Pounds Gallery, Mexico City (2026); and *Nordic Salon*, Mexico City (2026). Her work has also been shown at Zona Maco Art Fair, Mexico City. Her work has been featured in publications including Numéro Berlin, Helsingin Sanomat, Exit Magazine and Vogue Portugal.