

Gil Pellaton

Galop gallop galopp

13.06 – 16.08.2026

With its columns seeming to close in on one another in an optical illusion accentuating the sense of perspective, the abbey church's architecture is designed to convey a narrative. The colonnade converges toward a beatific, time-worn fresco where ethereal angels nonetheless remain. Three landings interrupt the steps along the clearly defined path leading to this image of Christian heaven.

This linear spatial organization served as the starting point for Gil Pellaton's project in this exhibition, meant to pivot our perception of the building and the worldview it embodies. All the works in *Galop gallop galopp* occupy the church's left side, so that we see and experience the space along its lateral axis. This orientational shift is operated gently, without violence, but it is quite radical in its determination to make us aware of various crisscrossing paths and a multitude of ways of being in the world.

In their 1981 book *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (History and Obstinacy, Zone Books, 2014), Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt contrast the history of capitalism, understood as the appropriation of natural resources and human labour, with characteristics that resist this control, such as, for example, workers' need to sleep. Similarly, *Galop gallop galopp* – a trilingual title ironically referring both to the headlong rush imposed by the pursuit of profit, and a horse rebelling by rearing up and stubbornly stamping its feet – sets its own divergent rhythm in opposition to the imposing rectilinear church and other forms of domestication and subjugation.

All the artworks were handmade by the artist and some of his friends. By means of their size – which remains modest in comparison to the church, the lack of distinction between fine arts and crafts, and between artworks and displays, as well as the deliberate presence of imperfections, they demonstrate what human beings are capable of achieving and attest to a desire for autonomy that breaks with industrial manufacturing.

This artisanal mode of production is coupled with a poetic commitment that embodies the principle of stubborn resistance to the authority of language, whether verbal or architectural. The exhibition consists of three installations that Pellaton calls "cantos." Each canto is a field where objects – found, matched up or hybridized by the artist – are brought together. They form units, like stanzas in a free verse poem. They repeat themselves, echo each other, interlock, switch places and break into fragments.

The three cantos trace a path through the church that gradually moves away from reality and enters into a fictional world. While still rooted in concrete objects, the first canto replaces the USM-brand modular furniture ordinarily used for the reception area at the entrance with other pieces made especially for the occasion. From a rustic chair made of cross-slices of logs to another formed by a sensual ribbon of polished metal, this eclecticism is in stark contrast to USM's standardized modularity. The other two cantos draw visitors into the passions and caprices of various characters, ranging from neurodivergency to galloping.

This composition is accompanied by a motif, a butterfly with outstretched wings that is first used to form small cupboards crafted from the kind of wood used

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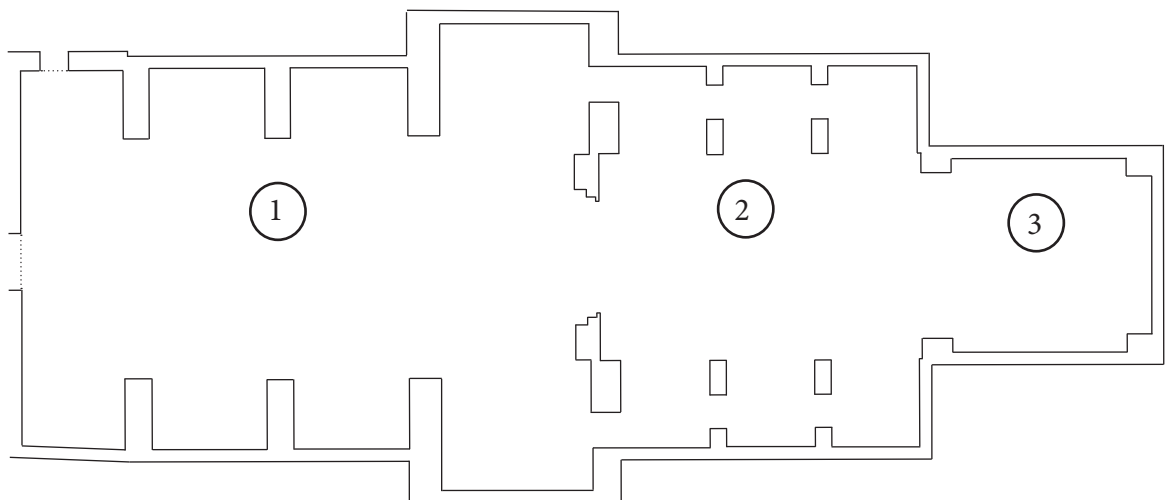
to make lutes and then in a series of large paintings where the colourful insect seems to emerge from or wander through a background of diaphanous brushstrokes. These new works are a continuation of a series on this theme. Pellaton two started two years ago, when a butterfly silhouette appeared on the surface of a twisted, half-built shelf. This fortuitous beginning gave rise to an obsession that led him to conceive a character called Bo Butterfly, the fictional author of a vast body of work concerning this lepidopteran.

The butterfly evokes the semantics of metamorphosis, the idea that the beating of wings can set off a far-reaching chain reaction, and the contemplation of nature's ephemeral beauty. These concepts can provide the keys to understanding the exhibition, with its three stages of the transfiguration of reality. But the motif's unexpected and unplanned appearance in Pellaton's work suggests that it should be considered a vessel open to redefinition.

In the exhibition, the butterfly containers also house collections of objects entirely unrelated to the insect – a set of trophies commemorating horse races and wooden panels adorned with obsessively-repeated, taped-on images like the same photo of the HC Berne hockey player Samuel Kreis, baby blankets and a rice cooker. After that, a video shows the hypnotic procession across the screen of a garland of cups. The absence of any logical link between these elements, except their repetition, attests to Pellaton's goal of practicing art as a form of gathering and collecting things. He selects real items, accepting or rejecting disparate elements according to emotional rather than rational criteria. Thus, the objects lose their meaning and function and become constituents of a language detached from its practical value and work like punctuation marks or notes on a musical score.

In musical terms, *Galop gallop galopp* unfolds very much as its title suggests, with stuttering haste. The same motif, the same note, is repeated like an ostinato of a refrain before a sudden shift in register that is sustained for some time. Visitors find themselves immersed in meditative trance sequences similar to psychedelic music, African percussion and Gertrude Stein's Modernist poetry. Like the latter, the exhibition seems to unfold gradually, stopping when it finds something, repeating it to transform it into something else, then moving on through a series of operations that produce a continuous and captivating present. This stuttering poetry reflects our hesitations, our dysfunctionality, our stubbornness and disobedience – hiccups in the continuum of reality that allow us to glimpse new perspectives.

Sylvain Menétrey, exhibition curator



1. Gil Pellaton, *First canto (galop)*, various and changing materials, 4K video projection, 2026
2. Gil Pellaton, *Second canto (gallop)*, wood and found objects, 2026
3. Gil Pellaton, *Third canto (galopp)*, oil paintings, wood, metal, spoons, 2026.