

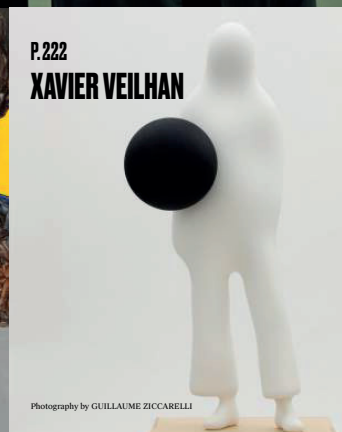
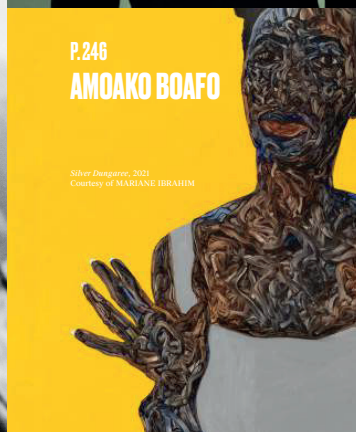
PERROTIN

Xavier VEILHAN

Hube,

Xavier Veilhan

June 2023



XAVIER VEILHAN

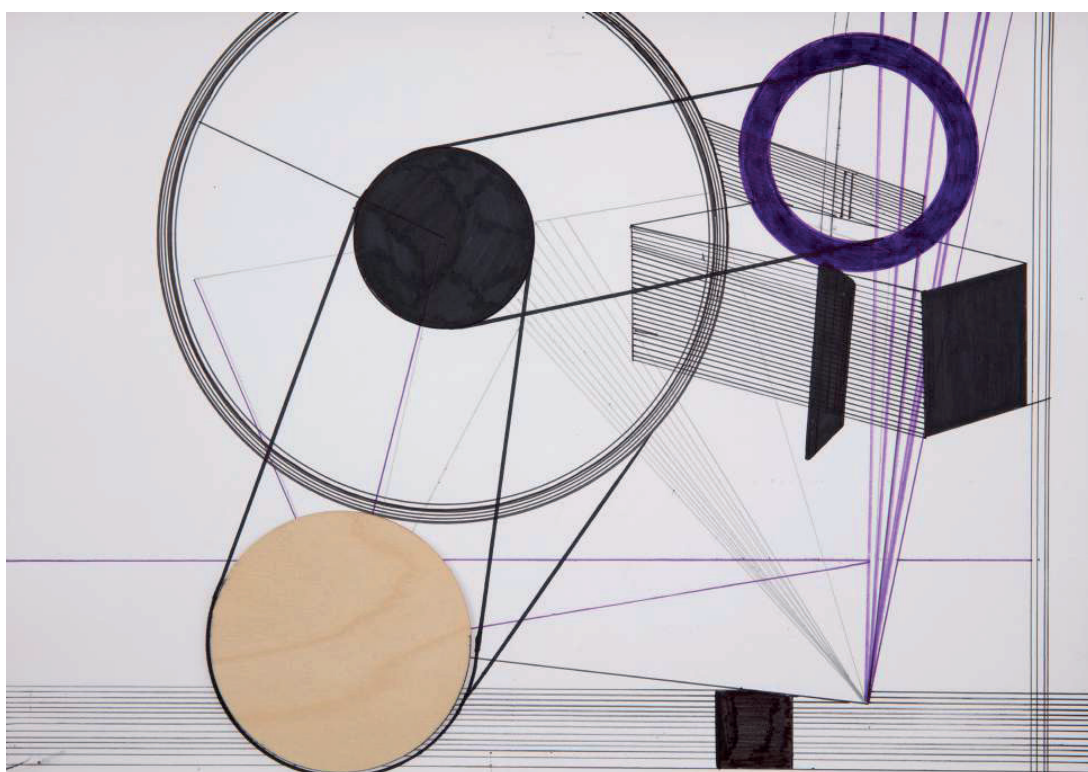
Drawing inspiration from tradition and technology, French artist Xavier Veilhan works across mediums ranging from sculpture to drawing and video. Regardless of the chosen medium, Veilhan's art actively engages its audience—often inviting them to become part of the work itself. This quality is especially evident in his collaborations with Chanel, most notably in the surreal animal sculptures he created for their Spring-Summer Haute Couture show at the Grand Palais Éphémère in Paris earlier this year. Veilhan has exhibited his work at renowned institutions globally, including the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Phillips Collection in Washington, and the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo. Veilhan's solo exhibition opens at Perrotin Paris on June 2nd and will be on view until July 29th, 2023.

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XAVIER VEILHAN
Photography by CLAIRE DORN
Courtesy of the artist and PERROTIN

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 XAVIER VEILHAN
Transmission, 2020
 Photography by GUILLAUME ZICCARELLI
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XAVIER VEILHAN
Mobile n°9, 2023
Photography by CLAIRE DORN

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KEEP THE ESSENCE OF THE PRESENT MOMENT

hube:
Your creative world is filled with sounds and music, sculpture and drawing, photography and film, design and architecture. It seems that all that is missing are texts and words. How would you describe your relationship to literature and poetry?

Xavier Veilhan:
I often have the impression that the world of images finds a way to short-circuit language. The experience of literature is often like a slow journey lasting several hours, whereas I'm in a world that is both slow and immediate.
Unlike a literary shock that occurs in the moment, I often see things that impact me later, when I consider the time between the before and the after. What interests me in my relationship to poetry are the practical forms of writing and ways of bypassing writing, such as the language used for very short formats, like haikus of information that produce something very poetic. Often literature is about frustration, dissatisfaction, and sorrow, which doesn't really interest me; I prefer poetry closer to Dadaism and Futurism, made of noise, onomatopoeia, something more dynamic.
I sometimes look at my SMS history that contains fragments and words that I do not, or no longer, understand. It reminds me of the poet Anne-James Chaton, who uses till receipts, bank receipts, etc., to find traces of poetry in the barrenness of reality.

h: Every artist exists in a certain cultural, social, or ethical context. Art, on the other hand, aspires to universal truths that overcome time. What kind of relationship do you and your work have with the future?

XV: This relationship is evident in the details. For example, when you put on white gloves to handle works of art it means they are finished, whereas during the process of fabrication, they are treated less carefully. I'm in between. When I look for the final form it's almost like a lottery wheel: when I decide on something, there is no time left, and the work stops at that moment. There is an arbitrary element that I try to combine with more rational criteria, but there is a moment when it ends, and the work leaves the studio. What happens afterward doesn't really concern me. If the work ends up in the hands of people who want to scientifically preserve it for posterity for posterity, I would be very happy, but that is not my responsibility. I think that if we had to preserve all the works of history, we would be unable to live.
Then there is the economic system, for example, which sucks objects out of the workshop and distributes them around the world. This is an important element of creativity: it creates a draft, like a desire. I don't master objects; instead, I focus on shapes and angles to create something that is right, like an observer, architect, or journalist. I have noticed that in the history of art, the people who last are those who manage to keep the essence of the present moment and not project themselves into the future. A painting by Goya, a bronze statue by Bernini, or a garden by Le Nôtre represent their time and that is what gives them historical value.

h: New digital technologies manipulate our sense of reality, and artificial algorithms imitate human beings. Do you think art will always be created with human participation?

XV: I am not very convinced by the use of statistical data when it comes to creativity, even if I have to admit that it is impressive. If we assess the potential of these tools, we must also assess how each person perceives these new sources of information. I think what is happening already happened on a smaller scale with radio in the 1980s. It's interesting that these new possibilities are accompanied by the privatisation of the world of information and a blurring of ethics. I'm pretty old-school in this respect. To me, someone giving their opinion and someone observing and analysing something are not the same thing. Lately, what has been most shocking to me is the placement of well-founded scientific statements on the same level as opinions. However, some realities are not opinions.
Technically, things can be very simple. A digital file that allows me to make a statue also enables me to create symmetry with one click, which was impossible for Bernini. In the same way, a work couldn't be in two places at the same time, which is now possible due to the ubiquity of digital technology. The notion that there is no longer an original or that all versions are originals is quite new, and yet we always move from this digital file and its particular qualities to an object. In the process of creating an actual object, these properties are reestablished within physical constraints such as weight and balance.

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XAVIER VEILHAN
Le Mobile n°3, 2021
Okapi n°1 & 2, 2021
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XAVIER VEILHAN
Romy, 2021
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