
CAROLINE POGGI ET JONATHAN VINEL
OUR HOLIDAYS WILL ALWAYS BE BETTER THAN YOURS

Artist and filmmaker duo Caroline Poggi and Jonathan Vinel present their solo exhibition *Our Holidays Will Always Be Better Than Yours* at New Galerie, featuring two films and a series of objects taken from their cinematic universe. Multiplying formats (short, mid-length, feature-length) and destinations (cinemas or exhibition spaces), the duo assumes the disinhibiting power of images and a sentimental writing aimed at a sick world.

In an epileptic 24 frames-per-second format, the first video *Our Holidays Will Always Be Better Than Yours* (2022) combines the bloodiest and jaculatory side of the video game industry with a "sensational" cinema. Patiently constructed over two years, it fuses ecstatic moments from video game games recorded by the players themselves and saved as war treasures. Passages from *Assassin's Creed*, *Elden Ring*, *Black Desert Online* or *Gary's Mod* and *Skyrim* are reorganized into a stroboscopic succession of images like a mental flicker or the waking nightmare of a neurotic AI.

To the sound of an infernal drone created by musician Pan Daijing, a collection of firearms, pornography and mammals plunged into the torments of hostile, over-densified cities emerge amid a clatter of bodies. Between synthetic bestiary and hallucinatory hymn, the viewer witnesses a dehumanized final judgment: a filmic epiphany for the seventh or eighth stage of advanced capitalism.

The saturation of images here acts like a sedative¹ or narcoleptic that the human brain cannot digest. Watching it is painful and you emerge numb. What is presented can be read as a genealogy of coitus and murder, where sex and violence are the unshakable pillars of anti-humanity. But in this machinic, energy-guzzling world, feeling is not absent. First, ecstasy: imagining Saint Teresa of Avila high on Ritalin, scrolling aimlessly to the sound of 6ix9ine in the background. Then, disgust at these tribal wars and mass killings, where the law of blood imposes itself amid the viscera of a data-center. Melancholy, finally, in the midst of this realm of shadows and ultraviolet avatars. This empathy is activated by sound, and acts as a tipping point, a way out of this frenzy and rehash of brutal images. Basically, it's a quest for origins - the origins of the world between sex and bloody impulses - but also the origins of the medium, where cinema reconnects with its cursed, unfair, earthly and material side: a cinema of attraction in a tomb for 500,000 chat-bots.

In this devastated world, where human beings seem to be outcast, there are still transitional objects that provide an escape, a physical or mental exile. Julien's tombstone (*Jessica Forever*, 2018), a place of remembrance; Prince's crowbar (*Prince Puissance Souvenir*, 2012), an object of exaction and release; the jacket of the ancient memory-card smuggler, a guide to recovering and making extasy (*Eat the Night*, 2023), or temporary redemption through industrial love. And then there are the clothes of orphans or lost children (*Jessica Forever*, 2018), which are BDSM SWAT outfits, both fortress textiles and ex-citations. All these objects come from their filmic universes. Here, these set relics are recontextualized and become anchors for a tainted theme park, a world of easter-eggs² and memorabilia providing access to secret passages.

The basement features *Il faut regarder le feu ou brûler dedans* (2022), a video produced during a summer residency in Corsica. A pyromaniac moody-girl heals the earth with fire: she cauterizes it. The island suffers from hypertourism, with its scars of concrete, its waste from Miel Pops or Kinder Bueno packaging and its sad vacant housing estates. In this arid land, fire is an evil without cause or destination. In the midst of dense, crimson smoke, car wrecks pile up. The ecological disaster is matched by an imaginary riot and insurrection, the devastation is joined by cathartic disfigurement, the chaos is interwoven with a tragedy of love, the desert with sentimental ballistics.

Caroline Poggi and Jonathan Vinel take note of the world's disorientation. They were born into it, and don't try to make sense of something that doesn't make sense. Instead, they counter it with sick films, projectiles and adulterated antidotes. Somewhere between illuminated cinema of attraction and romantic elegy, they invoke an ultra-contemporary sense of the baroque that never denies its fascination with the image - to the point of tears.

Pierre-Alexandre Mateos, Paris, June 2023

1. The first draft of this video was shown in Montreuil in 2020 at the inauguration of *The Opioid Crisis* lookbook (created by Dustin Cauchi and Dasha Zarahova), a project dedicated to the phenomenon of opiate addiction.

2. An Easter egg is, in computing or video games, a hidden function within a program (animation, game, message, etc.) accessible by means of a keyword or a combination of keys or clicks