

# MIREILLE BLANC

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Mireille Blanc's paintings approach reality as an enigma: caught between the familiarity of everyday life, and the strangeness of time's passing, the objects and photographic documents she frames and filters hold multiple meanings as both witnesses and subjects. Focusing on the minute details of image production and circulation in contemporary life, she intuitively reworks found and personal photographs to arrive at a middle ground between abstraction and sediments of memory, in compositions that blur the line between background and figure, often by reversing scales and ornamental patterns.

The artist often turns her attention to details from ceremonial moments of everyday life: birthday cakes, decorative balloons, kitsch souvenirs and used gift wraps take center stage as objects depicted at the brink of decay, in an instant right before they lose their spectacular function and become discarded and distorted, in a nod to entropy and the mortality of images. The lush textures of cream, chocolate or icing are reproduced through the materiality of oil paint in depicting highly ornamental cakes and pastries of various sizes and colors. They are sometimes half eaten, sometimes losing form behind a glass patisserie display, caught in the process of becoming documents of their own material demise. Another recurrent theme is found on commercial prints of canonical works of art, for instance a Van Gogh printed on a sweatshirt, worn, torn and folded with the movements of a body, or a reproduction hanging on a wall, gathering dust and losing its vibrancy through exposure to sunlight. In each one of these instances, the layering of the image allows the process to gain visibility: sometimes a plastic folder is present, more often pieces of tape or staples used to hold the photograph in place become part of the painterly depiction, pointing to original images as material documents that circulate in the world, exposed to the elements and the passing of time.

Born in 1985 in Saint-Avold, Mireille Blanc lives and works in Évry, France. She studied at the Beaux-arts de Paris (2009), and at the Slade School of Fine Arts in London (2007). Her work has recently been shown in solo exhibitions at Kunsthaus Baselland (2026), Anne-Sarah Bénichou Gallery (Paris, 2023), The Pill Gallery (Istanbul, 2019), FRAC Auvergne (Clermont-Ferrand, 2018), and in group exhibitions at La Verrière, Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, (Brussels, 2023), Musée des Sables d'Olonnes, (2023), MO.CO La Panacée (Montpellier, 2023), Beaux-Arts de Paris (2023), MASC - musée d'Art moderne & contemporain (Les Sables d'Olonne, 2023), Kunstwerk Carlhütte (Hamburg, 2019), Musée des Beaux-arts de Dole (2017).

Mireille Blanc was the recipient of the 'Prix Verdaguer' (Académie des Beaux-arts, 2021) and the 'Prix international de peinture Novembre à Vitry' (2016). Her work is part of important public and private collections such as Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Fonds d'Art Contemporain - Paris Collections, MASC – Musée d'Art contemporain des Sables d'Olonne, Soho House Paris, FRAC Auvergne. She is 'Cheffe d'Atelier' at Beaux-Arts de Paris.



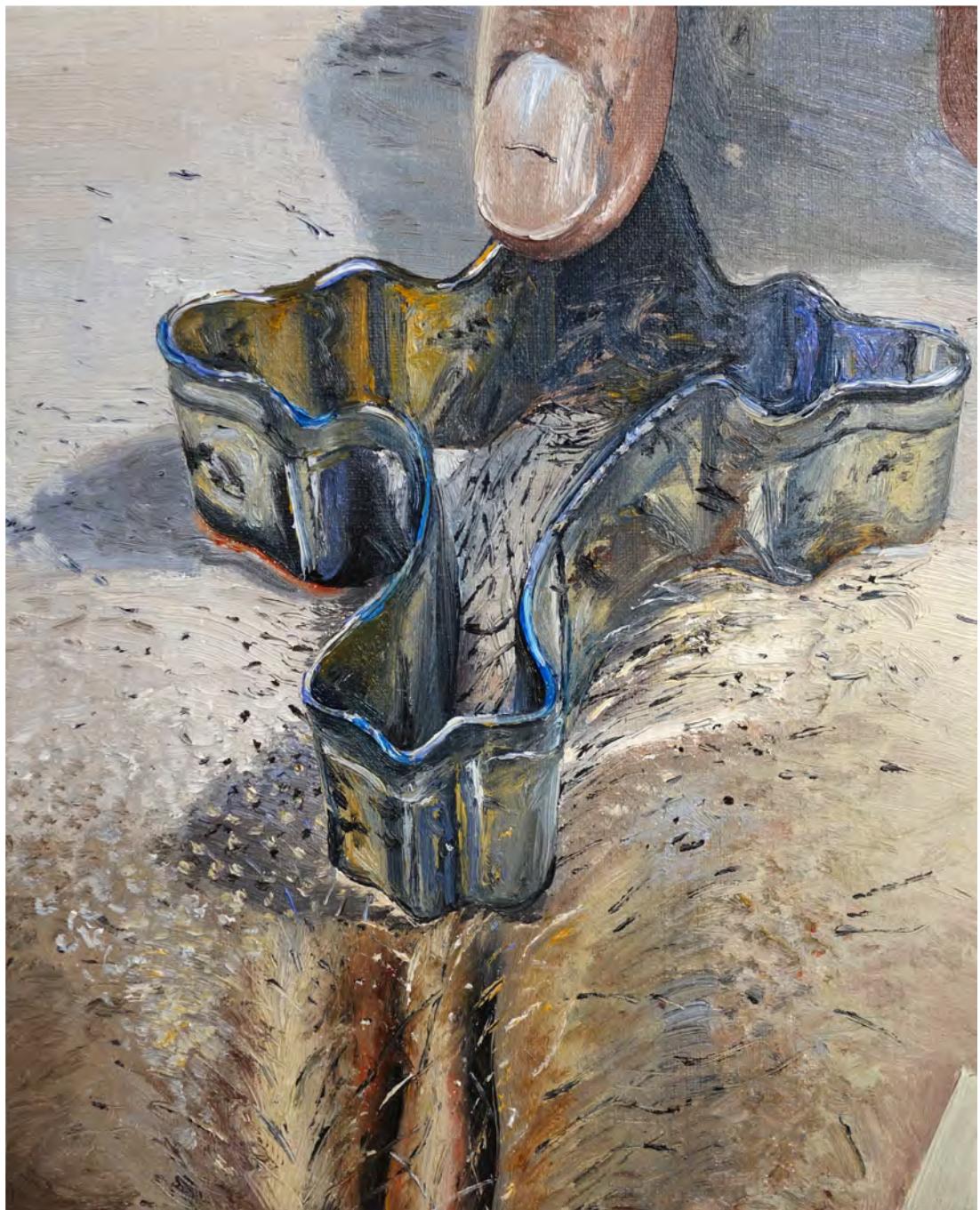
*Léonard au masque*, 2024, huile sur toile, 200 x 150 cm / Collection Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris



*Refrain*, 2023, huile sur bois, 20 x 15 cm



*Impressions (tee-shirt)*, huile sur toile, 200 x 140 cm



*Emporte-pièce (l'avion)*, 2023, huile sur toile, 31 x 25 cm



*Extreme Lemon*, 2025, huile sur bois, 40 x 30 cm



*Still life (Sant'Orsola)*, 2025, huile sur toile, 60 x 44 cm



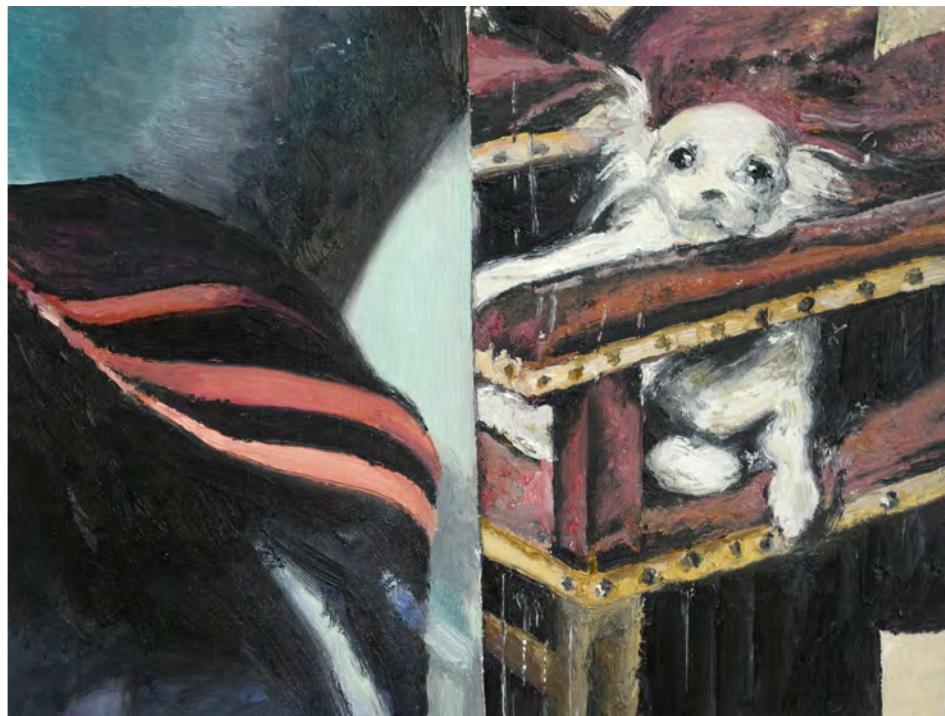
*Minouflet*, 2025, huile sur toile, 60 x 42 cm



Grappe (Marceau), 2024, huile sur toile, 200 x 150 cm



Anniv (J), 2024, huile sur toile, 37 x 50 cm



*Jogging Velazquez*, 2024, huile sur toile, 25 x 33 cm



*Idole*, 2023, huile sur toile, 150 x 117 cm



*Cake Flowers*, 2022, huile sur toile, 35 x 24 cm



Tournesols, 2022, huile et spray sur toile, 200 x 135 cm



*Hibiscus, chewing-gum*, 2023, huile sur toile, 31 x 25 cm



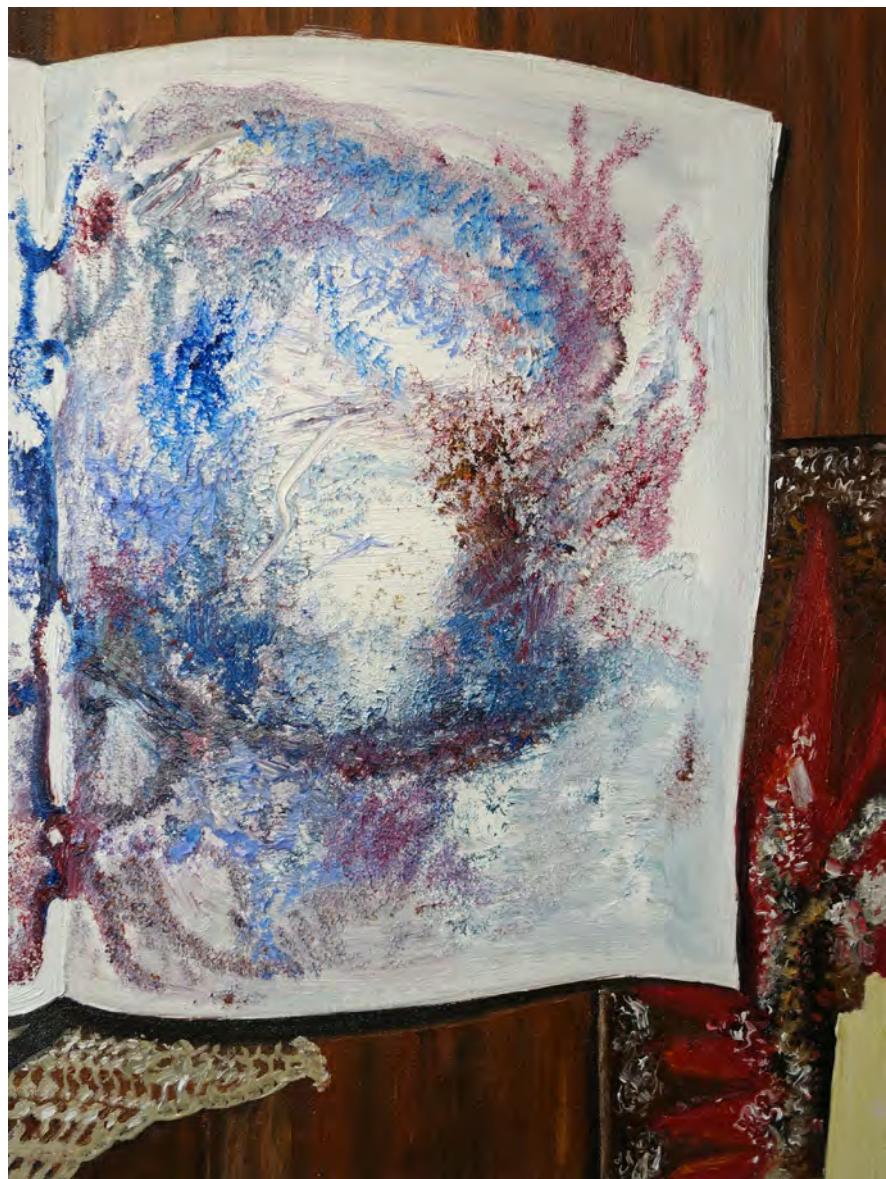
Raisins, huile sur toile, 160 x 125 cm



*Pomme*, 2021, huile sur toile, 24 x 18 cm



*Peau*, 2021, huile et spray sur toile, 200 x 150 cm



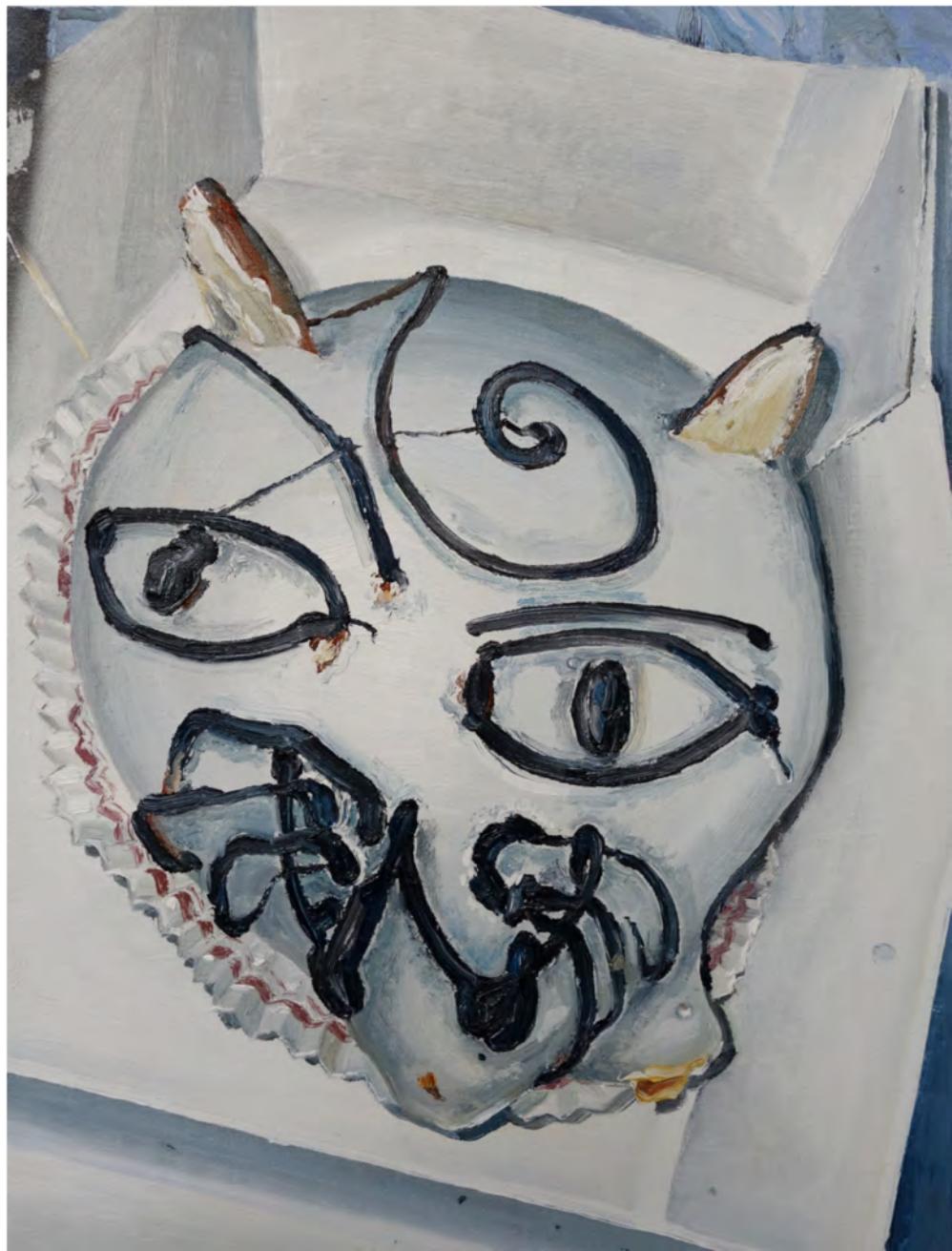
*Paillettes*, 2022, huile sur toile, 40 x 30 cm



Mountain, 2022, huile et spray sur toile, 200 x 140 cm



Cakeboy, 2019 huile sur toile, 27 x 20 cm



*Chat (1)*, 2022, huile sur toile, 40 x 30 cm



*Chat (2)*, 2022, huile sur toile, 40 x 30 cm



*Charlotte*, 2022, huile et spray sur toile, 50 x 38 cm



Studio, 2022, huile et spray sur toile, 60 x 48 cm



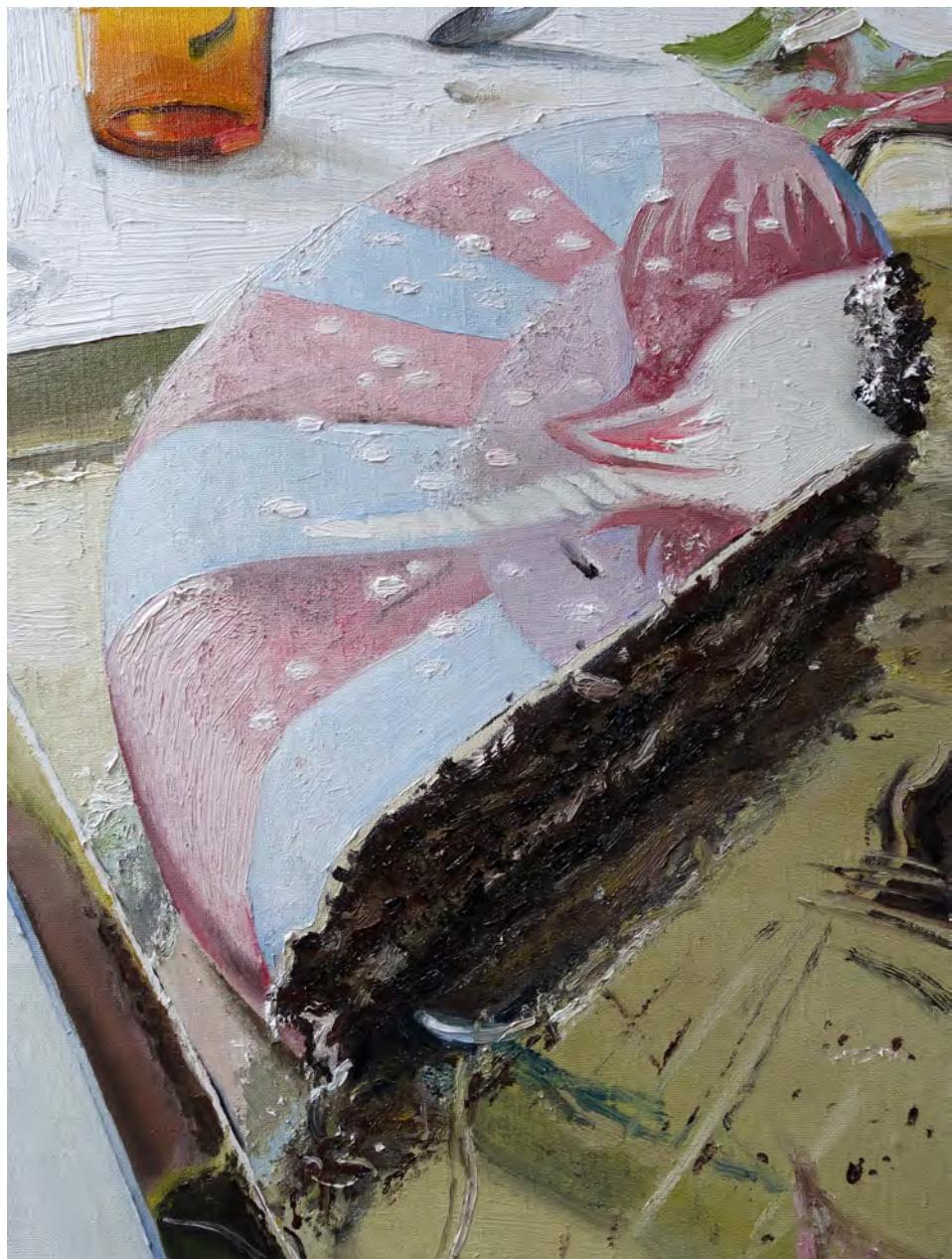
Gommettes, 2021, huile sur toile, 40 x 30 cm



*Poissons d'avril*, 2022, huile et spray sur toile, 120 x 90 cm



Gant, 2021, huile et spray sur toile, 45 x 30 cm



*Licorne*, 2021, huile sur toile, 40 x 30 cm



Chien, 2021, huile et spray sur toile, 60 x 48 cm



*Motifs*, 2020, huile et spray sur toile, 100 x 70 cm



*Quelle ardeur!*, 2020, huile sur bois, 24 x 18 cm



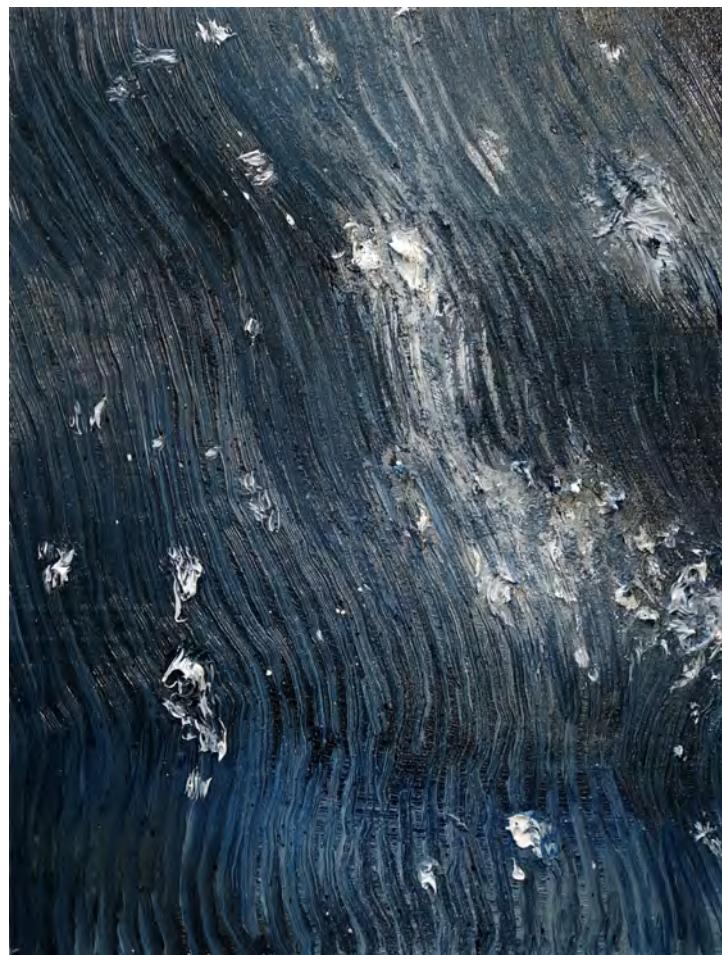
*Agrégat*, 2020, huile et spray sur bois, 40 x 30 cm



*Petit dragon*, 2020, huile sur toile, 47 x 34 cm



*Plume, vase*, 2020, huile et spray sur toile, 100 x 72 cm



*Sucre glace*, 2020, huile et spray sur bois, 24 x 18 cm



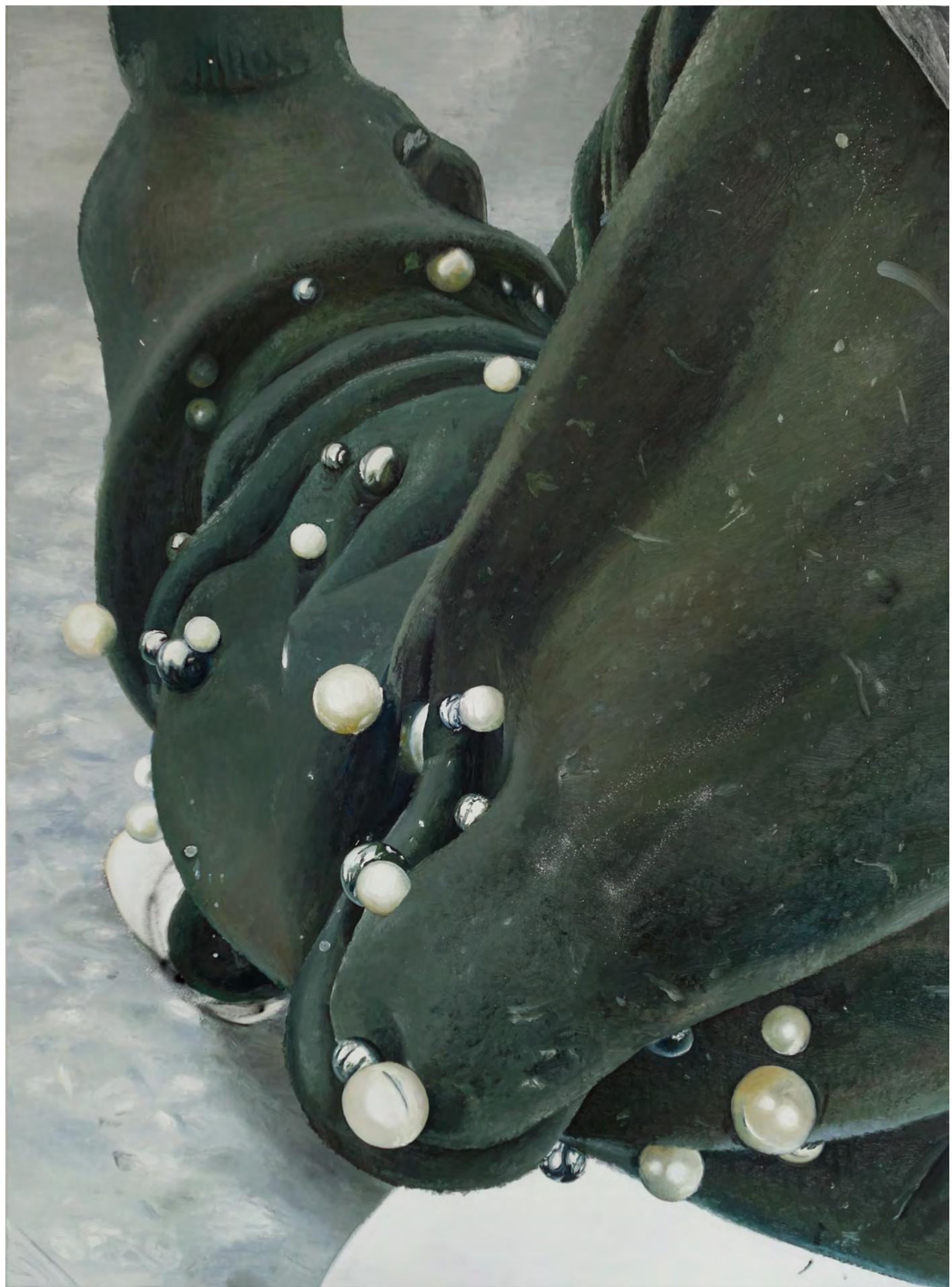
Astérisme, 2018, huile et spray sur toile, 200 x 150 cm



*Cahier*, 2020, huile et spray sur toile, 50 x 34 cm



Meringue, 2020, huile sur toile, 32 x 40 cm



Sweat, 2019, huile et spray sur toile, 200 x 146 cm



Planche 2 - A.W, 2018, huile et spray sur toile, 50 x 40 cm



*Grappe*, 2018, huile sur toile, 200 x 160 cm



Année 1990, 2018, huile sur toile, 21 x 29 cm



*Composition*, 2018, huile et spray sur toile, 190 x 126 cm - Collection FRAC Auvergne



Album 2 (*Memphis*), 2018, huile sur toile, 22 x 19 cm - Collection FRAC Auvergne



*Bustes*, 2018, huile sur toile, 78 x 100 cm — Collection Artothèque Grand-Quevilly



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*The Rose that Grew From Concrete*, Museo Sant'Orsola, Florence, 2025

## Far from the pictures – extract of text by Devrim Bayar / The Pill gallery, 2024

In discussing Mireille Blanc's work, it is often said that her relationship with photography serves as a premise for her pictorial works. Close-up shots, often taken quickly with an iPhone, guide the painting process in the studio. They also provide a glimpse into the life of the artist, who is not afraid of the commonplace. These snapshots take us into her kitchen, to a waiting line, to the page of a school diary. Her work, while overtly rooted in the domestic sphere and family life, is just as much about art history, as indicated by the plate number 2 from Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* at the entrance to the exhibition. The combination of illustrations created by the German historian in the 1920s ushered in a new form of visual investigation that some consider a genuine epistemological breakthrough. Following in his footsteps, Mireille Blanc uses photographic images as the starting point for a body of work in which seeing becomes knowing.

It is in this back-and-forth between the grand and the so-called small history that Mireille Blanc forges her path as an artist, without, however, evacuating her role as a mother and her identity as a woman. Hints of her family life are indeed present - plasticine games, birthday cakes - but the most obvious painting in terms of her gender identity is undoubtedly "Emporte-pièce (l'avion)" where, as the title suggests, a kitchen utensil is unexpectedly placed on the tonsure of a female genitalia. The ornate shape of the plane, reminiscent of the female reproductive apparatus, seems to imbue the natural material of the naked body. In this image, gender appears in the form of a mold deliberately placed on a physical attribute, and it is unclear whether the finger holding the cookie cutter is that of a third party or of the artist herself, who, through this gesture, integrates social gender norms. In a more childlike but no less significant vein, the small plasticine sculpture in the painting "Dog" reminds us how matter is molded into form. The "cats" depicted are just as factitious, since they are decorated cakes. In this case, it's the topping that trans-forms, in a rudimentary yet absolute manner, the way we perceive what we're shown.

The pastries, fruits and candies that abound in the exhibition evoke indulgence and pleasure. The painting "Croissant", which belongs to this iconographic group, once again creates a link with the history of canonical art, as it is reminiscent of one of the brioches painted by Edouard Manet. In his 1880 "Nature morte à la brioche", now in the collections of the Carnegie Museums in Pittsburgh, the pastry placed on a blue plate at the heart of the composition, just as in Mireille Blanc's painting, looks astonishingly like a male sexual organ at rest. There's an eroticism in this work that we find in a contemporary, feminized version in Mireille Blanc's work, where the sophistication of traditional French pastry is now giving way to more industrial, artificial pleasures, with packaging and colorants.

A similar sensuality runs through the images of sweatshirts, another recurring motif for the artist. Much like Wolfgang Tillmans' photographs, which show carelessly abandoned clothes, as if after a hasty undressing, the painted garments evoke absent bodies and carnal pleasures. These fabrics are also mediums for words and images, where the history of painting can once again be inscribed. The tracksuit in "Tournesols", for example, features a well-known painting by Vincent Van Gogh, first reproduced in the form of merchandise, then photographed on the sly by Mireille Blanc and finally repainted by her in the studio, in a logic of repetition reminiscent of the *Refrain* programmatically placed at the entrance to THE PILL gallery, alongside the reference to Aby Warburg described above.

Paradoxically, then, it is through repetition that Mireille Blanc distances herself from images. Firstly, by the distancing of painting, which proclaims its autonomy from the photographic reproduction of reality. Secondly, and above all, through the singular way through which she looks at everyday life. To the well-ordered life of the patriarchal family, she contrasts her freedom and nonchalance, which pervade both her technique and her choice of subjects. Beyond perfect images, the artist confronts us with sensations, impressions, gestures, and embodied flesh. Mireille Blanc does not seek to create an illusion.





*Se faire plaisir*, curators : Mireille Blanc, Marianne Marić & Sandrine Wymann, La Kunsthalle, Mulhouse, 2025

KIM LAIDLAW: Perhaps we could start by talking about your process. You take photos of objects, rework the photos on the computer, print them, let them live in your studio, and then paint the object that this document becomes. How does the first step come about? Is there any staging involved?

MIREILLE BLANC: No, hardly ever. Generally, it's something real, from everyday life. It's always connected to what I'm experiencing: it might be a moment, an object or a situation, something that grabs my attention and triggers the desire to make a painting of it. It might be because of the strangeness of the thing—I like the term "the unseen"—or, in any event, something strange enough to derail you slightly. Sometimes it's the fact that the object might be a bit kitsch, a bit tacky, or simply quite enigmatic, that makes me take a photo of it.

I take several pictures and then, a few days or sometimes even weeks later, I rework them, which means I crop them. That's why I don't really stage anything. It's more about photographic framing—there's a strong link to photography.

But there are two sources for the images. There are these photos I take myself, and then there are also sometimes old family photos that I reuse. With those, I focus on details. I zoom in and extract a fragment.

KL: So sometimes the photo itself is the found object.

MB: Exactly. I see it as an object or a document. And there is always the question of re-framing: often the object is tightly framed or sometimes it even goes beyond the frame; it's about the detail or the fragment. Then I spend quite a lot of time reworking them on my computer. Sometimes I adjust the colours a bit, but not that often. Then I print them out on my printer here in the studio—I like having these poor-quality documents. Some painters zoom into their images on a tablet, but I like to have something low-fi as it allows me to stay quite free. Once I've printed them out, sometimes I rework them: for example, I'll cut off an edge, sometimes I'll use spray paint on them or work into them with charcoal, directly onto the photo. Then for the small formats, I paint onto a stretched canvas. For the large formats, they're just on raw canvas pinned to the wall.

KL: And do all these stages create distance?

MB: Yes, it's a way of putting distance between me and the subject, of creating a gap. There are many layers between the initial object, the subject, the photo being taken, the cropping and my way of reworking it. I like to make it visible that what I'm painting is already a representation as a photograph. That's why you often see the tape

French artist Mireille Blanc paints still lifes—ostensibly, at least—often on a larger-than-life scale, zoomed in with a tightly cropped composition. Balancing on the border between enigmatic beauty and alluring bad taste, they feature a repertoire of everyday paraphernalia, including half-eaten cakes, empty yoghurt pots, kitsch knick-knacks and faded sweatshirts.

Yet they aren't really paintings of objects at all; they're paintings of photos—and paintings that question the very idea of painting itself. Blanc never works from life, but instead takes pictures of a scene that inspires her, and then translates the image of that photo onto canvas in gloriously thick, undiluted oil paint.

We visited the artist in her studio just outside Paris to see her paintings up close and in real life, replete with their visible brushstrokes. While her beagle sidekick Brownie snored peacefully at our feet, we discussed the reproduction of images, genres of art, and Manet's *Sprig of Asparagus*, with a palette covered in years' worth of paint—layered up high like the gloopy icing on one of Blanc's birthday cakes—sitting on the table between us.

marks from cropping or spray paint marks [included in the painting]. That adds another layer of distance, making it clear that what I'm painting is a *photo* of a cake, for example.

KL: It's not a painting of a cake; it's a painting of a photo.

MB: Exactly. There's the idea of photography and, at the same time, I paint with a lot of texture. I'm not trying to achieve the smoothness of photography. It's more about adding a kind of sensory dimension and translating all of that into materiality, playing with the creamy quality of the paint—the oil, the painting—and making that visible through each brushstroke.

KL: And the materiality of the paint shows the human gesture, distancing it further from the original photo and making it very much a painting. Your approach seems to be about reproducing images and questioning what an image is.

MB: And what a painting is, too. The painters I've always been interested in are those who fully embrace the fact that what they are doing is a painting, rather than a smooth *trompe l'oeil* approach.

I like to show that it's a painting, the way the Impressionists did with their paint. I don't dilute my paint; I don't use any thinner—it's just the thick paint straight out of the tube. But, at the same time, there's a conceptual dimension, or a contemporary update through the choice of subjects.

KL: I'm glad you mentioned the Impressionists as I wanted to talk about the fact that your work was recently exhibited at the Musée d'Orsay, next to Manet's *Spring of Asparagus*!

MB: That was incredible. And what's also interesting is that Manet painted brioches and lots of still lifes with food. With the piece I exhibited at the Musée d'Orsay, *Idole*, there's a slice of cake, but also this very contemporary detail of the purple manicured fingernail right next to it. I like this idea of twisting or updating the still life—that's something that really interests me in my work. There's always an object, but I like it when things go a bit awry, when it jars slightly, and there's an element of bad taste. For example, the cakes I paint are often already half-eaten and misshapen—I like that tipping point. So I thought it was interesting to show a contemporary still life next to Manet's asparagus which, for me, is pure painting: the subject has been stripped away to make room for painting in its purest form. I love that.

KL: What I also find very contemporary about *Idole* is the effect of the camera flash. Does that mark an evolution in your work, or is it something specific to this piece?

MB: I took that photo at a party where there was very little light, so I had to use the flash. But often the photograph—the document, the source image—indeed becomes visible in my painting, and when there's a flash, it can make it even clearer that it's a photo.

A flash also creates very strong shadows and I like that dimension, which I sometimes describe as haptic—so there's the tactile, thick paint and, at the same time, I like subjects that play with their materiality, with their almost sculptural quality. With *Idole*, the fact that there are such pronounced shadows makes the cake stand out and gives it that sense of volume.

KL: Is there also a temporal dimension? A flash marks a precise instant and I was thinking about the passing of time in relation to your work. We're placed in a specific moment: the cake is already partly eaten, so we know it's a certain point in the evening. We're situated in time; there was a before, and there will be an after.

MB: Yes, the cakes have usually toppled over a bit—I rarely paint a cake that's still intact. I often paint objects that are marked by a sense of time; the photos sometimes come from old photo albums, as I mentioned, so they belong to a kind of shared past, or at least to something linked to childhood. So there is, yes, a temporal dimension that interests me—it might be a connection to the past, or slightly outdated or kitsch objects. I like that this sense of time is something you can feel. And it's true that even in the photos I take myself, as you said, there's that in-between moment, in the passage of time.

KL: And you fix these very fleeting moments not only through photography—and the flash emphasizes that it's a captured instant—but also, ultimately, through painting, a medium that will outlive us by many centuries.

MB: I find that hard to think about but it's there. And also the idea of fixing [a moment] or sometimes trying to transfigure [the subject]. There's something about subjects that are somewhat "poor" or don't deserve attention. And still life is the lowest genre—it's not history painting; there's no narrative, the subject is somewhat humble. I like that.

I also quite like the idea of making a painting that requires the viewer to spend time looking at it so that the subject can come into focus. Some images aren't apparent straight away, and you're not quite sure what they are. And again, when it's a subject that isn't necessarily worthy of atten-

tion—a cake that's been half-eaten, or a somewhat modest subject—there's this idea of needing time to look, and I find that very interesting.

KL: You mentioned still lifes—do you consider your work to be in that genre? Because there is also sometimes a human presence. We see a sweatshirt shaped by the body of the person wearing it, but we don't see that person in an identifiable way. Or in *Léonard au masque*, we glimpse the hands and the hair of the boy behind a mask but not his face. The human figure is implicit but never fully revealed.

MB: If I had to choose a genre, then yes, I'd say still life. They're objects, things. But even when there's, for example, a sweatshirt like you mention, it's a body wearing a sweatshirt. The presence of the body is there, but always on the margins.

KL: Has that always been the case in your work?

MB: In the beginning, when I was a student at Les Beaux-Arts, the human figure was always present, but already in slightly enigmatic and strange actions. Little by little, I started to close in the composition. That shift happened when I went to London [to study at the Slade], which was a really important moment for me. People were much less inhibited there when it came to painting, whereas in France, we tended to carry a whole theoretical baggage. As a result, I felt much freer over there, and it was when I came back from London that I started working on smaller formats, using much thicker paint, and I removed the human figure altogether.

KL: So the focus is rather on inanimate objects. And you find beauty in these objects, these humble things. Have you always had this ability to see the beauty in the ordinary?

MB: It's hard to answer that. I think it's also about where you come from—I grew up in Lorraine [a region in northeast France]. I took lots of photos in my grandmothers' houses, of family trinkets and things like that.

The subjects I work with might fascinate me and I can find beauty in bad taste, in the kitsch, in things that aren't necessarily worthy of attention. At the same time, I might find them disturbing—and that's what I find interesting. There's this element of fascination, attraction and repulsion all at once. It's always there.

In the cakes I paint, there's that same dimension—in the sense that they're at "the limit". I like working along this boundary: the boundaries of what's recognisable, at the edge of abstraction. I like being on the borderline of bad taste. For example, for the cakes, there's so much texture and something almost sickly about them. One might ask, *are they inviting?* Yes, perhaps, but you don't

necessarily want to eat the cakes I paint. I like being on that boundary.

And the slightly kitsch subjects, like the shell ship [*Bateau coquillages*] isn't an object I find beautiful as such, but there's something that interests me when it comes to objects that have a slightly ambiguous status, that's what I mean. Objects that try to resemble something else. Like those weird, improbable cake moulds you can get. And, actually, the cake we were talking about in *Idole* had a photo of an actor printed onto it.

KL: Of Timothée Chalamet, right?

MB: Yes, exactly! The cake is all broken up, so it becomes this formless thing, and I like it when it shifts like that: when you no longer recognise it, or when the subject slips away and there's something that gets lost.

KL: And these cakes that represent something or someone else add yet another layer of representation. I'm also thinking of your painting *Aussière* with an inflatable in the shape of a monkey.

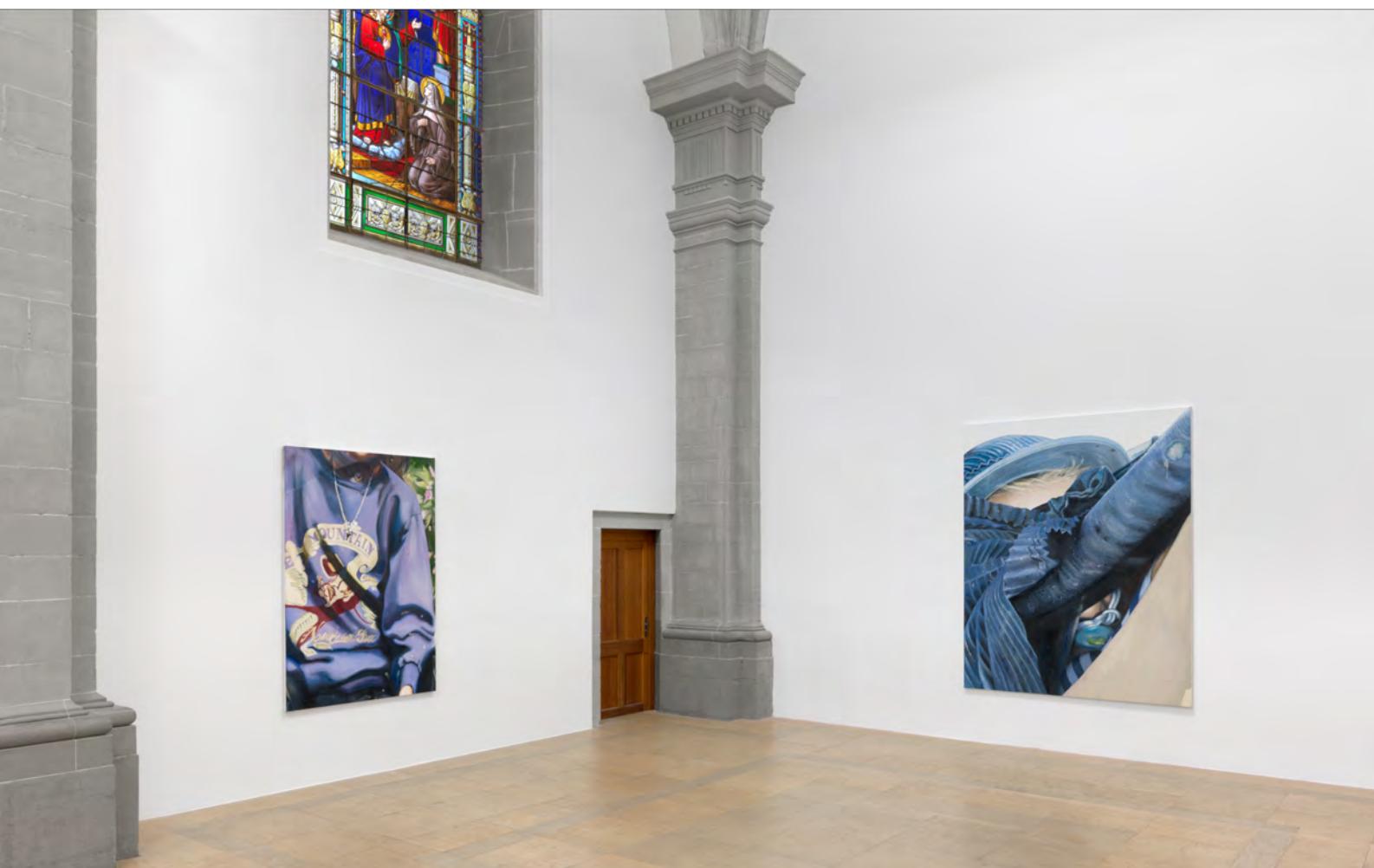
MB: There are definitely several layers to it. There are these objects that imitate something else, like that little monkey-shaped float you mention, for example. And at the same time, when it's placed in a certain way, you don't really understand it anymore. I like it when there's that strangeness to the subject and also this aspect of it being some kind of visual trickery.

KL: And we're reprinting photos of your work alongside this interview, which brings an additional layer of representation to the whole process! I suppose in a photo of your work though, the texture and matter are less visible.

MB: It's that gap between the real object, the actual painting, and its representation. You can still feel the materiality, I think, but it's true that, yes, it's better to see the paintings in real life.

KL: So where can our readers see your work next in real life?

MB: There's an exhibition in Florence, at the Sant'Orsola Museum. There are twelve of us artists, and we're showing our work in a place that used to be a convent. I'll have eight paintings there, and I'm doing a collaboration with artisans who work with *scagliola*, which is a kind of marquetry work using stone. I sent them photos and they've interpreted two of my paintings using that technique. It's the complete opposite of how I work, painting quickly—it took them two months to make the two pieces. And they are polished like marble, so they are completely smooth. I haven't seen them in real life yet, but I can't wait!



Artifices, curated by Philippe Piguet, Chapelle de la Visitation, Thonon-les-bains, 2024



*Far from the pictures*, exposition personnelle, The Pill Gallery, Istanbul, 2024

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## The tension in what we see

French artist Mireille Blanc's solo exhibition *Far from Pictures*, which proposes to take us "far from images", continues at THE PILL. We spoke to Mireille Blanc about this exhibition, in which ordinary moments of everyday life are brought to life with new representations

Interview: Merve Akar Akgün

You are renowned for your distinctive technique in which you use found photos as a starting point, which you reinterpret with delicate brushstrokes and a subtle color palette. Your work creates an effect of blur and fragmentation while bringing a dreamlike, introspective dimension to everyday scenes. What fascinates you about everyday life? How did your practice come to this point?

I'm interested in the enigmatic aspect of things; how the familiar, the everyday, even the banal, can suddenly become strange. My painting is all about the way things appear. This is what fascinates me about everyday life: How, suddenly, reality slips away and appears different, as if "unseen"? It's the phenomenon of reduction (in phenomenology) - which fascinated me when I was an art student: when things lose their substance and acquire a new one. What surrounds us can then be an inexhaustible subject for a painter! I've always worked from photographs. And everyday life, and a form of banality, and therefore of truth, has always been part of my preoccupations...

You explore themes of memory, perception and reality by working with blurred or damaged photographs. How do you relate to the past?

There's an immediate memory in my work, linked to the things I photograph on a daily basis. But there's also a strong link to the past, a more distant memory, when I rework old photographs, decades old, from which I extract details and fragments. The relationship to the past is also expressed formally through desaturation, with colors tending towards gray and white, where things are sometimes prey to disappearance (when the flash, for example, eats away at the photograph). I'd say it's more a kind of common past that I'm looking for than something personal - and so each viewer can find familiar subjects, objects from memory...

In your exhibition *Far From the Pictures*, you present paintings that reproduce not the subjects of the photographs, but the photographs themselves with their imperfections. Can you explain how this artistic choice enriches your exploration of the themes of memory and sensation?

I like to create a tension in what we see: I'm keen for the images to be restrained, so that not everything is immediately apparent. For me, this is one of the challenges of painting: the time it takes to come into view. This time is specific to painting itself...  
My work comes from an encounter with an existing object or photograph. I then photograph this object, or this photo (I specify that the photos I find come from family albums, personal or otherwise - I never look for images on the Internet, I wouldn't know WHAT to look for). I then proceed by successive distancing. I reframe, remove details, blur and distort my image. I exhaust my subject, making it no longer obvious. I push this feeling of strangeness that I initially had. I paint from these documents, making all these filters visible. It's the status of the image that interests me; it's a question of painting the reproduction of an image, the document itself, taped to the studio wall, the reworked photograph, with a thick, dense paste. All marks are thus made visible: the tape used for cropping, traces of light (the flash that re-injects light when a photograph is photographed), paint stains, water stains, 'accidents' in the studio, folds, which occur on printed images... This tends to distance my subjects, and creates a tension, in this gap between subject and viewer.

Ordinary objects or scenes are transformed in your paintings. In the same way that Andy Warhol brought a whole new approach to ordinary objects, you too unveil the magic of everyday scenes while making them complex and intriguing... How do you choose the subjects or images you decide to transform into paint? Is there a personal story behind some of your work?

The subjects impose themselves on me - it's always a matter of chance. There's a great deal of intuition involved in choosing subjects. And there has to be a need to paint an image. My painting tends towards a certain form of abstraction - I like to speak of "countered figuration". The subjects remain uncertain, sometimes struggling to emerge - when, in other paintings, they are immediately identifiable (it's then their improbability that interests me... the fact that something escapes).

There are often personal stories behind my paintings, since many of the objects come from my direct environment, but I find it interesting that they are not necessarily told, so that the canvases remain "open" to viewers, so that everyone can find echoes of their own lives and memories.

Your paintings often have a strong emotional resonance and can evoke personal memories in the viewer, creating a powerful and intimate connection with your audience. How do different venues influence your work, especially in Istanbul?

I find it interesting to decontextualize my work, to confront it with other views, to see what its reception will be in other places, other contexts (than France, and Paris where I work). Istanbul is a city full of contrasts, inspiring - I've been there several times - with its mix of tradition and modernity. I was particularly touched by the atmosphere of the city, the lively, vibrant atmosphere that emanates from it. All this nourishes and permeates my painting.



Mireille Blanc, Planche 2 - A.W., 2018, oil on canvas, 50 x 40 cm

Aby Warburg plays a central role in your exhibition, in dialogue with AW's work and his *Atlas Mnemosyne*. How does Aby Warburg's methodology and his concept of the iconology of the interval influence your creative process and the way you perceive the relationship between painting and photography?

When I discovered the *Mnemosyne Atlas*, and the scope of Aby Warburg's research, I was fascinated. By studying images, their analogies, echoes and correspondences, Aby Warburg tried to think of a history of gestures, of the persistence of human movements. Epochs, styles and forms collide on the *Atlas* plates, constellations of images, drawing new relationships, new lines of knowledge, both improbable and obvious. A whole process of image memory is thus exposed. I like to think of my painting in terms of clues, constellations, resurgences of motifs and recurring subjects, without hierarchy, as Aby Warburg did. In my painting, I work against the idea of ONE subject - not in series either. But there are recurrences, which I realize a posteriori. I also think that as an artist, you revolve around the same idea all your life...

*Plate 2 - A.W.*, a painting after Aby Warburg's plate, which opens and closes the exhibition, is programmatic of the links, connections and formal rebounds between the paintings in the show.



Coi, curator : Joël Riff, La Verrière, Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, Brussels, 2023  
- Palette, 2023, huile sur toile, 200 x 150 cm / Collection CNAP



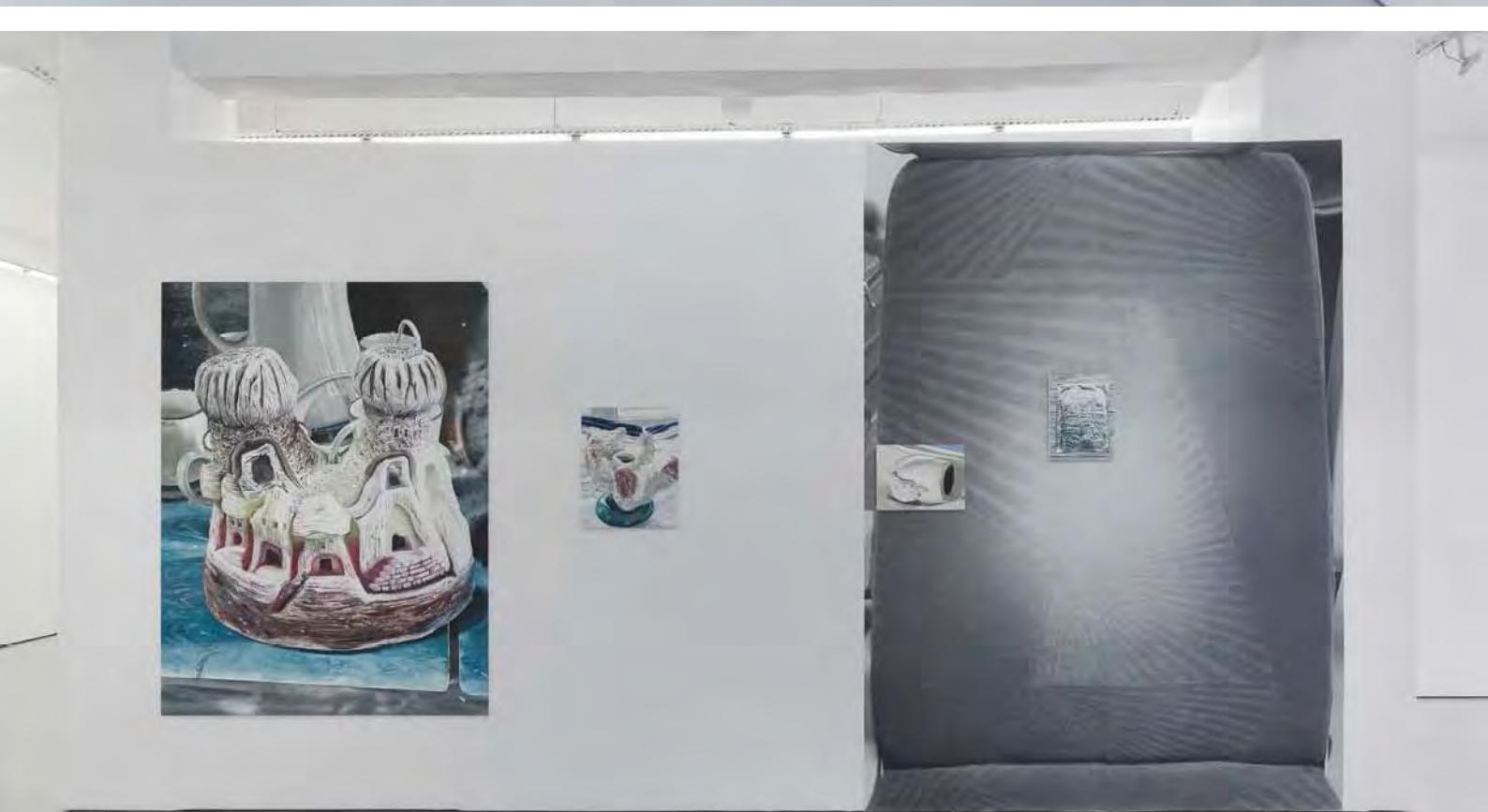
*Glaçage*, exposition personnelle, Galerie Anne-Sarah Bénichou, Paris, 2023



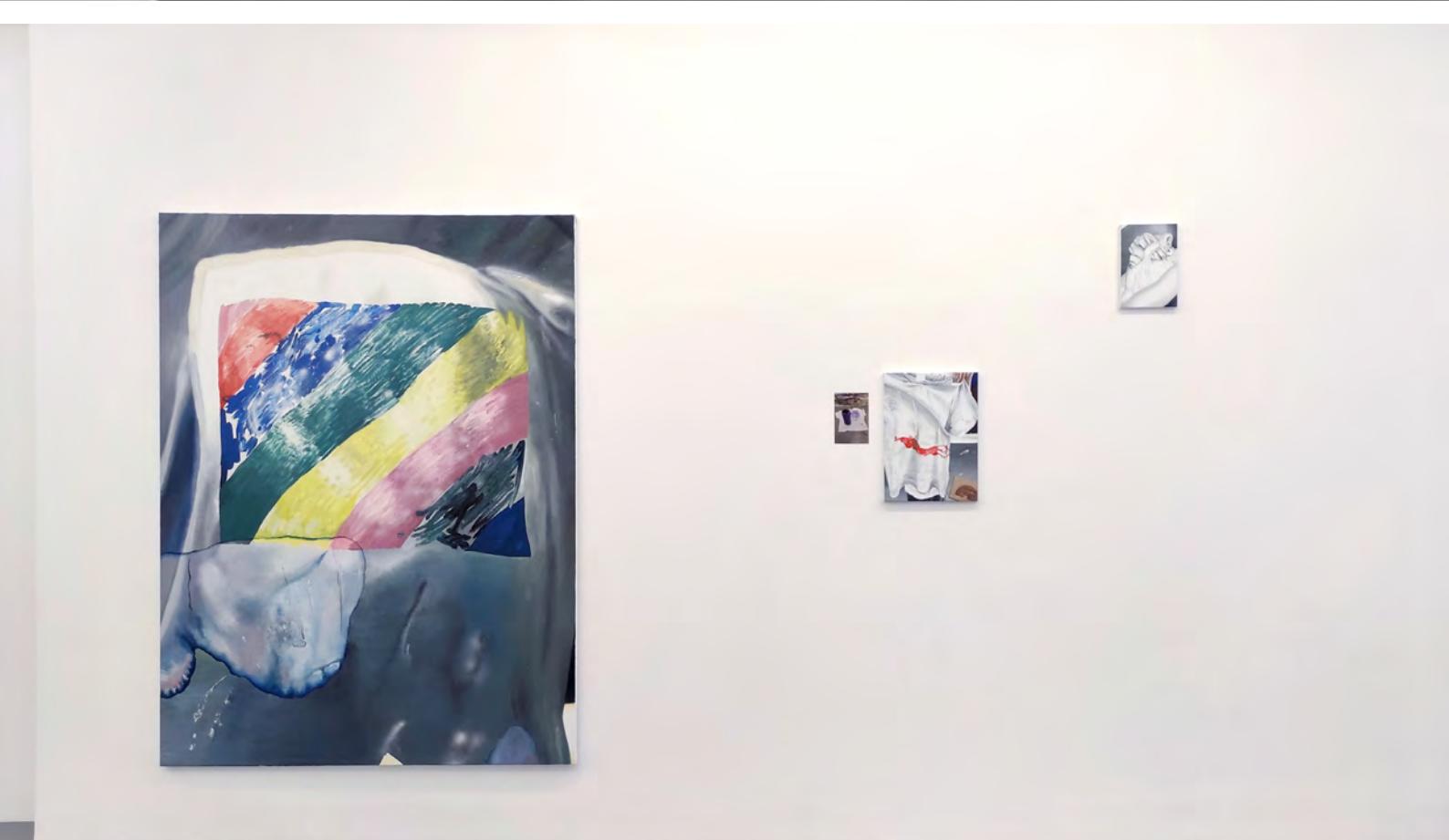
Exhibition view, *Les apparences*, group show, A cent mètres du centre du monde, Perpignan, 2021



Exhibition view, *Album*, solo show, Espace d'art contemporain Camille Lambert, Juvisy s/Orge, 2021



Exhibition views, SPR/NG, solo show, The Pill gallery, Istanbul, 2019



Exhibition views, *Kinder coquillages*, solo show, Galerie Anne-Sarah Bénichou, Paris, 2020-2021





Exhibition views, *La sommation des images*, solo show, curated by Jean-Charles Vergne, FRAC Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand, 2018

exercice d'admiration



LUC TUYMAN

## « Une peinture qui résiste »

La jeune artiste française Mireille Blanc rend hommage à son aîné, le peintre belge Luc Tuymans, qui expose à partir du 22 mars au Palazzo Grassi, à Venise.

Par Roxana Azimi

Dans le panthéon personnel de Mireille Blanc, il y a Manet, Chardin, Morandi et Spilliaert. Mais aussi, et surtout, Luc Tuymans, « *le plus important peintre contemporain* », selon elle. En majesté jusqu'au 6 janvier 2020 au Palazzo Grassi, à Venise, l'artiste anversois appartient à cette génération qui, plutôt que de s'avouer vaincue par la photographie, a renoué un dialogue fécond, mais sans fascination, avec ce médium. Depuis les années 1980, Tuymans s'échine en effet à retirer aux images tout magnétisme : il les dilue, les appauvrit, les efface, les réduit à des spectres exsangues.

Mireille Blanc est étudiante aux Beaux-Arts de Paris lorsqu'elle découvre son travail vers 2005. D'emblée, la jeune femme se reconnaît dans cette peinture du doute. « *J'avais été frappée par la figure humaine présentée par fragments, le sentiment de retrait et d'éloignement, la froideur distanciée* », raconte-t-elle. La peinture de Tuymans



MIREILLE BLANC

est d'une grande force conceptuelle – et en même temps quelque chose échappe toujours. Je me suis sentie proche de sa manière d'épuiser une image, de la pousser très loin vers une forme d'abstraction. La question de l'effacement et de l'aveuglement m'intéresse beaucoup. C'est une peinture qui résiste. »

### L'étrange dans le quotidien

Comme son aîné, Mireille Blanc s'appuie sur le filtre des images. Elle photographie ainsi sweat-shirts usés, vaisselle ébréchée, gâteaux ou jouets fânés. Parfois, elle utilise des photos existantes, extirpées d'albums de famille, qu'elle laisse décanter dans son atelier avant de les ...



Mireille Blanc,  
Pull-over,  
2018, huile sur toile,  
39x50 cm.

## exercice d'admiration

Luc Tuymans,  
*Wandering*,  
1989, huile sur toile,  
69,9 x 54,9 cm. Coll. part.

« J'ai, comme lui, une certaine méfiance vis-à-vis des images et c'est l'aspect énigmatique des choses qui m'intéresse – comment le familier, le quotidien, voire le banal, peut soudain devenir étrange. »



Photo Ben Blackwell/Courtesy David Zwirner, New York, Londres.

### Luc Tuymans

1958 : naissance à Mortsel (Belgique).  
1976-1986 : études dans diverses écoles d'art de Bruxelles et Anvers.  
1985 : première exposition personnelle au Palais des Thermes de Bruxelles.  
2004 : exposition personnelle à la Tate Modern à Londres et K21 à Düsseldorf.  
2019 : exposition « La Pelle » au Palazzo Grassi, Venise. Vit et travaille à Anvers. Représenté par la galerie David Zwirner.

reproduire en peinture tout en gardant leurs imperfections. « *J'ai besoin de passer par la photographie pour le cadrage car je cadre plus que je ne compose*, explique-t-elle. *Je m'intéresse au statut de l'image : il s'agit de peindre sa reproduction, un document, une photographie.* Cela tend à éloigner mes sujets et une tension naît de cet écart entre le sujet et le regardeur. » Ses tableaux sonnent comme des inventaires de souvenirs personnels, alors que Luc Tuymans questionne souvent le lien à l'Histoire. La matière des tableaux de Mireille Blanc est aussi beaucoup plus épaisse et onctueuse que celle diaphane du peintre belge. Chez les deux artistes toutefois une grande place est laissée au doute, à l'étrangeté, à la faille. « *J'ai, comme lui, une certaine méfiance vis-à-vis des images et c'est l'aspect énigmatique des choses qui m'intéresse – comment le familier, le quotidien, voire le banal, peut soudain devenir étrange* », précise-t-elle. Pas simple de trouver la bonne place face à un



Courtesy Mireille Blanc et The Pill Gallery, Istanbul.

Mireille Blanc,  
*Grappe*,

2018, huile sur toile,  
200 x 160 cm.

### Mireille Blanc

1985 : naissance à Saint-Avold (Lorraine). 2002-2009 : études à l'École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Paris, à la Slade School of Fine Art de Londres et à l'École nationale supérieure d'art de Nancy. 2016 : lauréate du prix international de peinture Novermbré à Vitry. 2018 : exposition personnelle « La sommation des images », Frac Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand. 2019 : exposition « SPRING », galerie The Pill, Istanbul.

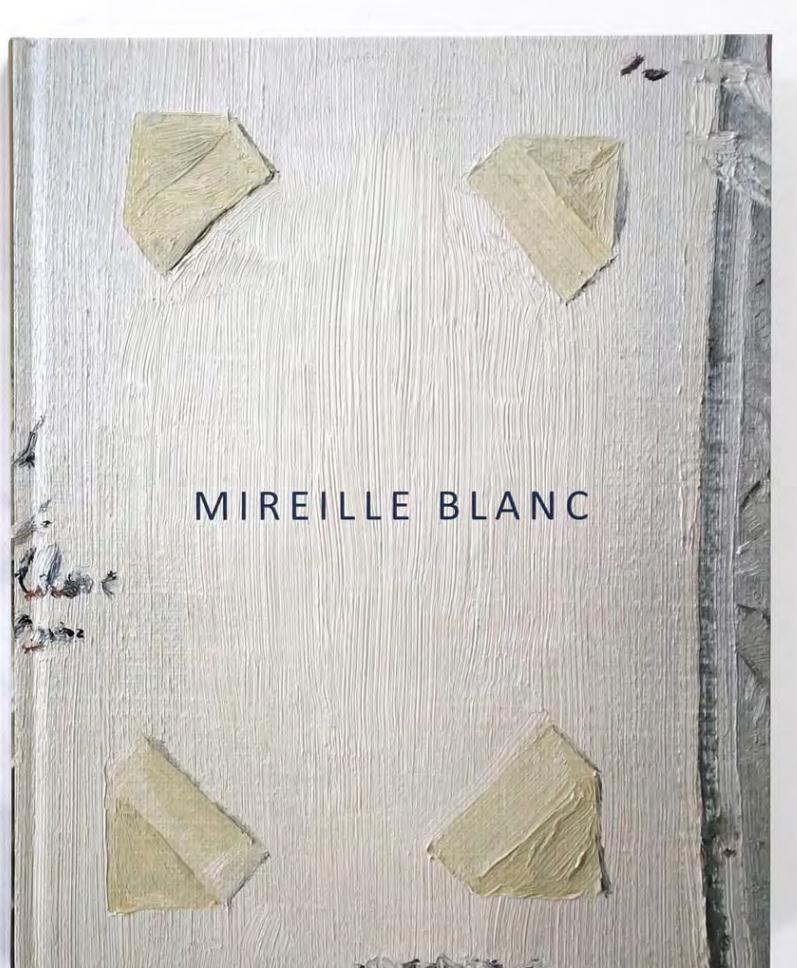
ténor de la peinture : faut-il coller de près ou de loin, être contre, tout contre ? Avec le temps, Mireille Blanc s'est sensiblement dégagée de cette influence. Pour regarder ailleurs et en soi. Sans jamais renier son admiration pour « *un peintre qui ne se répète pas, qui est toujours fascinant et dérangeant* ».

### À voir

« **La Pelle, Luc Tuymans** », jusqu'au 6 janvier 2020, Palazzo Grassi, Venise, [palazzograssi.it](http://palazzograssi.it)

« **SPRING, Mireille Blanc** », du 28 mars au 18 mai, galerie The Pill, Ayvansaray Mahallesi Mürselpaşa Caddesi 181 Balat Istanbul, [thepill.co](http://thepill.co)

« **Feedback, collection Frac Auvergne** », jusqu'au 8 avril, musée Crozatier, 2, rue Antoine-Martin, Le Puy-en-Velay (43), [musee.patrimoine.lepuyenvelay.fr](http://musee.patrimoine.lepuyenvelay.fr)



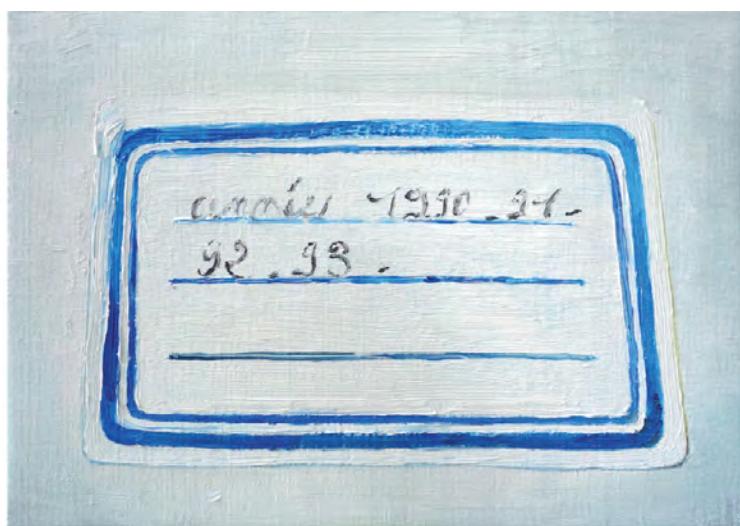
***Mireille Blanc***

Monography published by FRAC Auvergne  
Editions  
Text by Jean-Charles Vergne

Published in 2018

30 x 25 cm

160 pages



Années 1990  
2018, huile sur toile, 21 x 29 cm

— Mireille Blanc

***Mireille Blanc, Album***

Monography published by Espace d'art contemporain Camille Lambert, 2021  
Text by Karim Ghaddab

Published in 2021

21 x 21 cm

28 pages



Mireille Blanc Œuvres/Works 2011-2018

***Mireille Blanc, Oeuvres/works, 2011-2018***

Monography published by Sunset Editions  
Texts by Joël Riff and Jean-Charles Vergne  
Graphic design by studio Bizzarri&Rodriguez

Published in 2018  
28 x 22 cm  
68 pages



Photographie : Andrès Donadio