

THE RAVESTIJN GALLERY

PRESENTS

JEAN-VINCENT SIMONET



Jean-Vincent Simonet / *Heirloom*, 2022
Inkjet on plastic, fingertip intervention, handmade lead frame / Size 48 × 68 cm
Unique piece

The Keys to the Factory by Jean-Vincent Simonet

Opening: Saturday June 17, 2023, 17:00 - 19:00

Exhibition: June 17- August 26, 2023

For the 2023 edition of our annual Summer Show, The Ravestijn Gallery is delighted to present *The Keys to the Factory*: a solo exhibition combining works from three overlapping projects by French visual artist Jean-Vincent Simonet.

The featured bodies of work each take cues from the artist's personal history; his family owns a printing factory near Lyon, passed down from generation to generation. Over the course of a childhood spent on site, Simonet became accustomed to the familiar choreography of the factory's fluctuating output; used principally for the production of 'poor materials', such as commercial flyers or product labels. In a youth steeped in printed matter, Simonet could not help but absorb the influences of the factory's various graphic and visual codes.

For his most recent creative ventures, Simonet returns to the factory 'as it sleeps' – by night or during holiday periods – honing in on overlooked details, observing the changes that have occurred through time, and reimagining the site as an experimental artistic laboratory. With the factory as both subject and staging post for Simonet's artistic explorations, his work marks an attempt to renegotiate his complex relationship with the family business. Mirroring the sliding scale of image typographies that emerge from production lines, the projects Simonet develops here both zoom in and pan out; reflecting the experience of being within the factory, his results occasionally evoke the heady fumes of ink and industry.

Schooled in the slick aesthetics of applied photography, Simonet's practice has in recent years stepped away from fashionable worlds of control and perfection, embracing a painterly sense of irreproducibility, and celebrating the material potential of image-making. Suitably, *The Keys to the Factory* reflects the restlessness of the site it examines, establishing a space of steady transformation rather than just a stable collection of finished words. In an exhibition that evokes the messy dynamism of a studio-cum-production site, Simonet's Mechanical Paintings are anything but fixed. Printed onto plastic coils commonly found in offset printing, then altered further through coating, sweeping, drying and washing, these images transform over the course of time, their liquid colours bleeding across defiant, unabsorbent surfaces.

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Jean-Vincent Simonet / *Waterworks*, 2021
Edition of 30 unique copies, all hand printed / only a few copies left
Signed and numbered

Where Simonet's Mechanical Paintings are overwhelmingly abstract, works from his adjacent Heirlooms series have documentary origins, with a characteristic visual twist. Focusing on the material and architectural details of the factory – storage cupboards, paper waste bins, boxes of printed matter, the desks where design choices are made – they sidestep portrayals of the workforce, offering an alternative view on the business's conventional function. Printed on plastic, Simonet alters the resultant images with his fingertips, grappling physically with his own relationship to the site, from its systems of economic value to the burdens of its familial significance. By way of his interventions, each piece is made unique – a counterproposal to the uniformity of the commercial production line, and to the apparent reproducibility of photography.

Elsewhere, the exhibition displays a number of Simonet's innovative *Waterworks* publications side by side, of which only a handful remain. Developed at the factory in 2021 through a bespoke printing process, *Waterworks* marked the start of Simonet's study of the site. Just 30 copies of the book were produced; uniquely hand-assembled, their image sequences are consistent, but the manifestations of their printed images vary widely from copy to copy. An imposing textural window installation – rendered 'like an aquarium in ink' – completes the exhibition.

General Information

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Opening hours: Monday to Saturday 12:00 - 17:00 and by appointment