

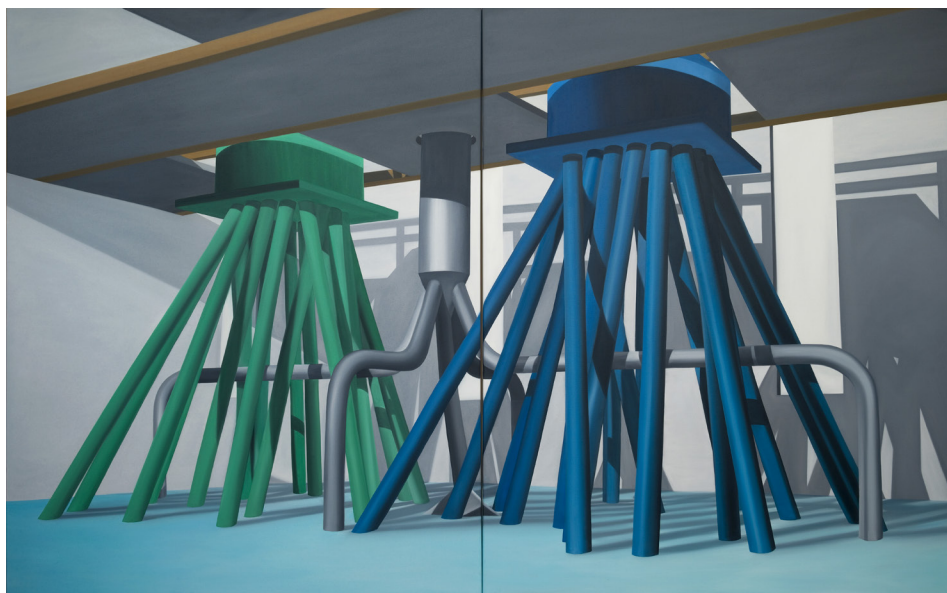
Sébastien Mettraux (Switzerland, 1984)

Ex Machina

artgenève 2019 - January 31 - February 3, 2019, **STAND C45**

opening Wednesday January 30, 2019, 14h - 21h, by invitation only

public days : Thursday 12h-19h, Friday, Saturday and Sunday 12h-20h



Sébastien Mettraux, *Untitled*, 2016
Oil on canvas, 200 x 320 cm

A graduate of the Haute Ecole d'Art et de Design de Genève (HEAD) and of the Ecole Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne (ECAL), Sébastien Mettraux lives and works in Switzerland. His studio is located in the Vallorbe train station, where the Orient Express used to stop, an environment that seems timeless today and fascinates the artist with its offbeat atmosphere.

In perfect harmony with the Swiss universe where he grew up, Sébastien Mettraux assimilates characteristic topics of the Swiss environment, such as Swiss atomic bomb shelters, Swiss military training sites, luxury villas promoted by local real estate agencies, industrial machines or medical prostheses. These topics, which stand like powerful symbols of a specific era and a profoundly Helvetic way of thinking, compose the artist's vocabulary, leading to a visual language that reflects what could be defined as "Swiss DNA".

Part of the so called Millennials, the artist is infused with the digital culture, the transhumanism, the Anthropocene and the insecurity of his age, as well as affected by the paranoia that the world has experienced since the attacks of September 11, 2001. These topics feed his work in which there is no human presence and question our relationship to life, but also our relationship to death and the passing of time, such as in his latest series *Vanités* (since 2018), a sort of modern "memento mori".

The series produced with the backing of the Leenaards Grant in 2015, entitled *Ex Machina*, not in reference (or maybe yes) to the eponymous movie (2015) where an artificial intelligence takes control of its creators, represents industrial machines as sculptural elements, witnesses to another time. The subjects are isolated, decontextualized like "still lives", totems of the impermanence of all things. The machines that the artist had the opportunity to experience or observe fascinate him "as elements that generate objects, series, processes, but also on a formal level, because their forms are only determined by their function" (Sébastien Mettraux, 2016).

The monumental work exhibited at artgenève (*Untitled*, 2016) celebrates a machine used in the agriculture industry in a pure aesthetic. It is part of the industrial landscape of northern Canton de Vaud, whose unique heritage is appropriated by Sébastien Mettraux. The work was featured in the artist's solo show at the Vallorbe station in 2017, an exhibition extra muros of the Centre d'art contemporain d'Yverdon-les-Bains. It was also published in *Ex Machina*, 2017, under the direction of Karine Tissot, éditions L'APAGE.

Gowen Contemporary will present a solo exhibition by Sébastien Mettraux in spring 2019.

Sébastien Mettraux lives and works in Vallorbe. Personal exhibitions (selection): (coming soon) Sébastien Mettraux, Solo Show, Gowen Contemporary, Geneva (May 2019); Exhibition for the inauguration of the ELNA building, HEAD, Geneva (2018); ART Paris Art Fair, Paris (2018); Ferme de la Chapelle, Lancy (2018); Forma Art contemporain, Lausanne (2017); Vallorbe Station / Yverdon Art Centre (2017). Group exhibitions (selection): Centre d'art Quartier Général, La Chaux-de-Fonds (2017); Espace Voie 3, Vallorbe (2017); Museo Villa dei Cedri, Bellinzona (2017); Mudac, Lausanne (2016); Musée Jenisch, Vevey (2014); Fondation de l'Hermitage, Lausanne (2013) Sébastien Mettraux won the prize at the Biennale d'art de La Chaux-de-Fonds (2018); the regional cultural prize of Yverdon-les-Bains (2017); the Leenards prize in 2015; the Swiss Art Awards prize in 2009. Sébastien Mettraux has just completed State of Vaud Art Residency in Berlin (2018-2019).