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VICTOR BURGIN,
SOPHIE CALLE,
MEL CHIN,
RHEA DILLON,
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GÜNTHER FÖRG,
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ANDREAS GURSKY,
PETER HALLEY,
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MARTIN WONG,
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Video Killed the Radio Star

12.06 – 11.10.2026
Mudam Luxembourg

The 1980s and their
Cultural Echoes



Julian Schnabel

Hector

1989

What is a painting? What constitutes painting? How do you make a painting that's not like other people's paintings, something that's personal to you? I was twenty-six years old, searching for everything I knew and didn't know, putting it into that thing — conscious and unconscious. The combination of materials, the marks I made on the surface, the structure I built to paint it on became the thing. The unhinged openness of what that is, what it opened up for painting and for me personally — it's still an open question.

If you look at *Hector*, there's an army tarp on it and two white marks. These tarps were used as material for tents. In the paintings I made over the past few years on materials covering fruit markets in Mexico, the color was selected by someone else, not me. There's no personal language, just a personal selection of language. As much as seeing a broken-down truck in Mexico with a tarp on the floor that looked like an elephant's skin and saying: 'I've got \$70 in my pocket — can I buy this from you?' Then stretching it between some palm trees in the jungle and painting there. I always prefer to paint outside because I can see better. I paint in harsh light, in dark light — you get to see all the different permutations of light in the day.

One related painting is called *Cortez* (1988), which is in my own home. It's just a big tarp I found, with patches where somebody repaired it and a hole in part of it. One day in the studio the skylight had a leak and made this incredible stain on it. I didn't want the stain to go away, so I took Damar varnish and linseed oil and painted

the stain in — just so the stain would stay. Then I took a piece of material similar to the one on this painting and glued it on. That was it. I didn't think I needed to paint a white mark. It seemed to say what I wanted it to say, and it still does. The paintings I keep are the ones I keep learning things from — or maybe I just like them.

The name Hector refers to both the film director Hector Babenco and Hector from the *Iliad*. There's a sense of doubleness, of parallel lives. If you think of portraiture and lamentation, they really are about bringing things to life. It's the same thing for me to paint Andy Warhol and not let him fall through the cracks. When I made the plate paintings of Van Gogh, what happens is that many times people go to the museum just to see if the painting they saw in a book is there. That's it. Fame somehow robs a work of its ability to be seen. Looking at those images again, using them as an opportunity to begin another kind of dialogue. That's a breathing, living organism, commemorated for another set of meanings.

My approach to painting is like jazz. Would you ask Miles Davis where he took that note from? You just listen and decide if it's inspired or not. 'There are no wrong notes' said Thelonious Monk. It's about breathing. If you're making something, you're opening up an arena for an audience to come in, creating the possibility of a community of seeing, a perception one could become part of, in the presence of this thing that gets made.

Tarkovsky said that art is a living, breathing thing. It is a representation of life. Life contains death. A representation of life excludes it, so all art is optimistic. You can never have pessimistic art, even if the subject matter is tragic. You can only have talent and mediocrity. The notion of what art does go beyond the medium, beyond the paint, beyond the object... They're fragments that make up what resides in us after we've been confronted with the work. There's a line in *In the Hand of Dante* — the last film I made — where the character Isaiah played by Martin Scorsese says to Dante played by Oscar Isaac: 'you've lifted the veil on the inexpressible, you've entered the sigh, you've become the poem.' What does an artist wish for, except that?

Wherever you put a painting, it changes the nature of everything around it. Norman Rosenthal once called one of my shows *Permanently Becoming and the Architecture of Seeing*. There's always a contradiction between the physical and the pictorial. If you think of the first plate paintings, where most of the plates are not painted over, they're reflective and white, and the paint is matte — there's a chasm between those two things, and that disparity creates the space where the activity can occur, where you're observing observation.

All of my work is probably like a time map. *Hector* has a date on it, but what the painting is goes beyond that. When you see it, it brings you into its present. Art brings you into its present, beyond time, beyond the categories people use to manage infinity...

Julian Schnabel was born in 1951 in New York, United States.
He works in New York.

Interview conducted on 16 March 2026,
by Caroline Honorien.

Rhea Dillon

The *Vexilla* series wasn't initially intended to be a series. I painted the first work, *Vexilla Maurus*, in 2021. It emerged more as a response born out of exhaustion with reality. It was an attempt to speak through that condition from a positionality that is becoming increasingly shared and understood by many. Both the US and the UK had at that point been subjected to the Trump presidency and successive conservative governments. What felt particularly concerning was the surprise expressed by many people towards these political results, as though these structures had not already maintained an incremental stranglehold on us for years. My friends and I had been conscious of the rise of the far-right over the previous decade. From 2022 onwards, there was also an increasing focus on discourse around land, around Palestine and around other countries across the world facing their own forms of genocide and far-right politics. All of this was already accumulating within my thoughts before this artwork.

My practice often engages with the diaspora — specifically the African diaspora, which I'm part of — and I am also deeply interested in vexillology, the study of flags. *Vexilla* derives from the Roman *vexillum*, meaning a little flag, sail or banner. Thinking about the diaspora moving across the globe, forced to roam, I began to imagine us as these little sails scattered across the Atlantic. In Latin, the design nation used to describe anything or anyone as 'dark' or 'Black compounds' is *maurus*. Thus, *Vexilla Maurus* is 'little black sails,' or more specifically, 'little dark-skinned sails.'

The most prevalent colour found in flags is red, which usually symbolises bloodshed, sacrifice, power or revolution. Thinking about how other artists engage with Black Britishness and American Blackness in their work, I wanted to ask: what would a flag representing the diaspora look like? What does a flag look like that speaks to not having land, not having a stake in land?

The second work, *Vexilla Sumpta* (2022), was where I first began using anti-climb paint, which creeps across the surface of the painting, swallowing the right-hand side in an almost didactic way. The work is spatially arranged as a flag being gradually subsumed, as a sort of index of the rise of far-right politics today. And now, in *Vexilla Onerosus* (2023), the paint almost fully overtakes the surface. At present, there is a clear widespread awareness that we are living under forms of fascist governance spreading across Europe and the Americas. We are weighted down by it, caught within it. *Onerosus* translates as 'burden' in Latin.

With the anti-climb paint, there is something in the way the material can transfer onto another person — onto an 'Other', in a context where 'Other' is often framed as the diaspora. What does it mean to place this architectural tool of surveillance

onto someone who doesn't yet know what that Otherness looks like? To activate the mechanism of that othering and cause a kind of psychic break? There is also something in using a paint that never dries where extending the life of an artwork — not towards perpetuity, but towards demonstrating that it is actually living, and drawing attention to the life it has already lived — that greatly interests me.

Grounding is crucial when you think about being part of the diaspora, when you return to whichever motherland you are in relation to. This terrain held my family, still holds my family, and nurtured incredible revolutionaries running up in the mountains in Jamaica. Recently I've created a very literal relationship to the environment by incorporating soil from that land in my work, from the area where my great-great-grandfather owned land. Land that still belongs to members of my family today. When I read other people's scholarship, the parts that speak to me are the sections where they create a framework, language, or theory for something I have already felt — they name something I have been feeling but didn't know how to put into words. Katherine McKittrick's *Demonic Grounds* is one great example.



Vexilla Onerosus, 2023

Poetry and theory are both just paradigms — considered separate communities, but both extending what community and belief can mean. Theory is ultimately pulling things together to create a picture of what has happened, where we are, and why. Poetry does the same. Like jazz musicians entering that fluid state, all the theory becomes the condition that allows you to arrive there.

I really love the word diffraction — it's one I've been drawn to for the past few years. I wrote a poem to think through it and used it as the prompt for the contri-butors I invited for my year of guest editing Montez Press' *Interjection Calendar* (2024). I wanted to question what it means to not simply reflect, but to move through something, to multiply through it? How do you diffract into the world rather than just reflect back? Because we need to change so much of the world whilst understanding it is our home. It's a question I don't have a singular answer to — hence working it out through poetry and poethics. Blackness is very much like that. It can part a room, and it can also engulf a room shrouding it in darkness. Which is essentially to say: Blackness is always the room.

Rhea Dillon was born in 1996 in London, United Kingdom. She lives and works between London and New York, United States.

Interview conducted on 26 February 2026, via video call by Caroline Honorien.

PETER HALLEY

1987

YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW

I think of the 1980s as the time when three-dimensional experience began to be replaced by two-dimensional images as a measure of reality. But my work is very different from that of Pictures Generation artists like Richard Prince and Cindy Sherman. I wasn't interested in images. I was trying to come to terms with the emergence of networks and digital space. The 1980s were the start of the digital era. By the end of the decade, the personal computer and the internet had arrived. In the early 80s, I was attempting to map a space that would subsequently become the space of the internet, where we are all connected through predetermined technological conduits.

I've primarily used Day-Glo fluorescent color since 1981. They are brighter than earth pigments; they are literally more intense. I began using them because I wanted to echo the world of LED light and the intense artificial lighting you see in sports stadiums and places like shopping malls.

I remember that in the '80s and '90s, people were really resistant to bright colour as an element in painting. But after the iPhone was invented in 2007, they started to become more comfortable with my paintings. With the iPhone, people began looking at brightly coloured screens all the time. I think it fundamentally changed our aesthetics, not only in my own work, but in a lot of art that has been done since.

I began to exhibit in Europe in the 1980s – it felt like a kind of golden age. From my point of view, social democracy in Europe had reached a high point. In Paris, François Mitterrand was building all the new museums. By the end of the 1980s, London had become such an interesting place and Germany was certainly resurgent. I used to say: this is about as close

to utopia as a human society can get. Everything has changed since then, but that's my memory of Europe at least from the point of view of an outsider.

Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow (1987) [part of Mudam's Collection] is one of a group of paintings I did in 1987 and 1988, in which I wanted to diagram how humans divide time into sequential segments. All the paintings have three horizontal canvases joined together over a very long base. The color changes from left to right. I was thinking of film frames or other mechanisms through by we divide continuous organic time into discreet segments. I was also thinking about Ellsworth Kelly's paintings that created linear spectrums of colour on separate canvases. In retrospect, it was a detour in terms of the direction of my work, but I think the paintings are strong and employ their large scale effectively.

Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow is intended as a dry, pessimistic, humorous work. It is not an optimistic painting. The horizontal line runs across the bottom of the painting; it doesn't reach up to interact with the upper panels which are uniformly dark gray from left to right. That's why it's titled *Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*. Yesterday is dark, today is dark, and tomorrow is still dark. Nothing changes.

There is a book called *Bomb Culture* (1968), which is interesting. It was written in England in the 1960s and deals with London's counterculture. The author, Jeff Nuttall, described art after World War II as shaped by the assumption that there was going to be a nuclear war, and therefore no future for civilization.

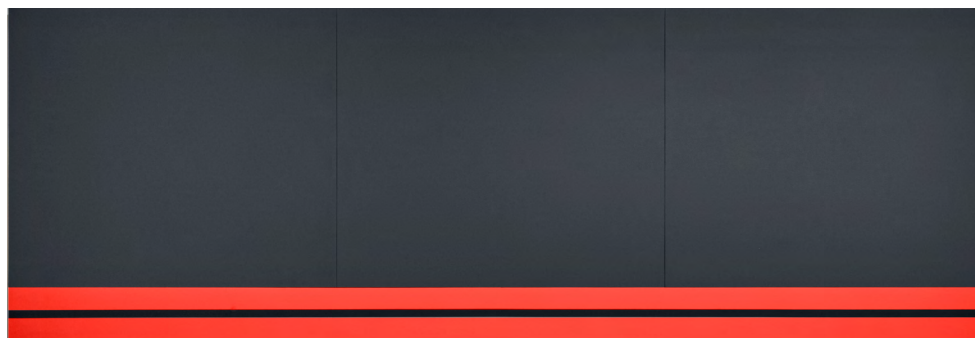
That resulted in an era of performance art, improvisational jazz, action painting and happenings. These were art forms that celebrated the present moment, because there wasn't going to be a future. I think that era lasted until about 1980. Then, when Ronald Reagan was elected president and didn't start a nuclear war, I think a lot of artists, including myself, realised that civilization wasn't going to end. And people started making paintings again.

Part of the reason I launched *Index Magazine* in 1996 was that the New York art world had fallen apart in the 1990s. There was a terrible art recession, and there wasn't much going on in New York. The idea of reaching out to people in other fields – literature, music, fashion and film – was very appealing to me. We wanted to cover every kind of alternative culture, especially what was called "indie" culture in the 1990s. That was the central theme of *Index Magazine*: supporting independent culture as opposed to mass culture or corporate culture.

I've always been inspired by intertextual connections. When I was writing in the 1980s, one of my central ideas was that artists are not only inspired by art, but also by music, films and books. More generally, inspiration comes to me from what other people are thinking and saying – from constantly expanding the range of ideas around me.

Peter Halley was born in 1953 in New York, United States.
He lives and works in New York.

Interview conducted on 9 March 2026
via video call by Alexine Taddei.



JOYCE JOUMAA

PERIODIC SIGHTS

2025



Periodic Sights (2025) emerged from a need to tap into a phenomenon in which the organization of the mundane in Lebanon became bound to time and to light, as electricity distribution gave way to alternative schedules. This is also what guided the title itself; the idea that sight was made available intermittently, depending on when available light could facilitate it. The urban landscapes of both Beirut and Tripoli have always been sites in which my work unfolds; they are unique to my upbringing in both cities and to the effect that the political charge inscribed in these spaces had on me, and on us, as Lebanese citizens. The locations depicted in the work are a portrait of that experience. This is also particular to the contemporary history of Lebanon which is marked by an ongoing cycle of political violence.'

One of the biggest illusions about the artwork-institution relationship is that we tend to think the artwork is shaped by the context the institution creates around it – regarding how it frames or controls the work. I prefer to believe, however, that the artwork is shaped by the conditions under which it was produced. These conditions contradict what the institution represents. It is in this contradiction precisely that the essence of the work unfolds through. With the electricity schedules being exclusive to Lebanon, the work imposes on the viewer a temporal experience that is tied to a geography other than Luxembourg's, and it is this absence of institutional intervention that allows the work to exist.

I come from video; it is the medium I studied and the one I first began making work with. Only recently I have become interested in developing an adjacent medium that is sculpture. In some ways, it feels that even when working with other mediums, I still start by thinking through images. When we consider the definition of the word kinetic, it speaks to the notion of resulting from or relating to motion; something equally inherent to the nature of video. In this way, I began thinking about the making of *Periodic Sights* the same way I think of video: a work that envelops time, light, and image. It is exciting to see how the medium of video finds its way into these material translations as my practice continues to develop while I definitely consider this work to mark a key moment in the evolution of my practice.

The legacy of the Lebanese civil war (1975–1991) generation of artists was very formative in my early experiences of witnessing and consuming contemporary art, particularly in learning how to think critically about space and politics. So many of these artists were also working with images and the politics of visibility which inspired so much of the way I look and how I come to visually process a given context.

But because I did not live through this war myself, I became an artist who is rather drawn to the margins of this history: what came before, and what came after? I find it interesting that I am not bound to a single historical chapter as a generation, but rather to a multitude of micro-chapters that I find myself in conversation with and about. To name some: the 2005 series of assassinations, the 2015 Garbage crisis, the 2019 financial crisis followed by the 2020 Port explosion, and the current ongoing land theft and aggression in Beirut and in South of Lebanon.

One of these important micro-chapters in Lebanon that shaped my experience in Lebanon was the 2019 financial collapse, which was the main precursor to the collapse of the national electricity grid, among many other failures. When things fail, they require what might be called reconfiguration: a condition under which people are compelled to rethink how to sustain themselves and the world around them differently. In this process of reconfiguring, new potential emerges: new languages (the electricity schedule), new landscapes, new realities. It is within this space of potential that I am most interested in working.

Joyce Joumaa was born in 1998 in Beirut, Lebanon.
She lives and works in Beirut, Lebanon; Montreal, Canada;
and Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Interview conducted in writing, on 1 April 2026

Hélène Yamba-Guimbi

When I'm in France, I have a work schedule that starts early in the afternoon, basically corresponding to when the US wakes up and when the political talk shows begin. I work super late into the evening. The shows are broadcast throughout the day, and I've got into the habit of listening to them while I'm working.

Before I came back to France in January 2025, I'd been living in Los Angeles for quite a few years. Donald Trump had just been re-elected. Listening to the news was a way for me to stay connected to what my friends and colleagues who had stayed behind were going through.

Influenced by the Genoa protests [of 2001], Franco Berardi, known as 'Bifo', started conceptualising accelerationism around 2010, arguing that as time accelerates, violence intensifies. Donald Trump's second election victory was a new stage of intensification, I think. A new scandal erupts every day. I see it very much as a strategy of stupefaction and disorientation. By the time of our conversation, in March 2026, there had already been the renaming of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America, the Epstein files, changes to work visas, concentration camps in the Everglades and the abduction of Nicolás Maduro. There's a politically leftist Twitch streamer, Hasan Piker, who summed it up pretty well: 'Every day is a Watergate.' There's a new scandal every day, but the tide is so strong that no one has time to react, to take stock of what's happening or to mobilise so that they can take action.

My light works are ways of distilling these various political events, but also things happening in my own life and the theoretical texts I'm reading. Working while listening to political news feeds into my pieces; it's the fabric they're formed from. This is maybe even more true of *Foreign I* and *II* (2025), made in Los Angeles in spring amidst the ICE (United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raids, the protests and the deployment of the National Guard.

ICE – the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency – was established in 2003 as a reaction to the 11 September 2001 attacks. Its budget in 2024 was somewhere around ten billion dollars. In July 2025, the Republican-majority Congress handed it a budget of somewhere close to seventy-five billion dollars – over sixty-three billion euros – up until 2029. That's the very same moment the raids were escalating, starting in New York. Then when I was back in LA in spring 2025, ICE was being deployed en masse to deport migrants, both legal and illegal, which was a profound shock across LA's various communities, given that California is meant to be a 'sanctuary state'. Why [was it such a shock]? No doubt because California was built on wave after wave of immigration from Central America and Asia.

LA's communities went out to protest; they did what they could to protect their loved ones. It was strange. My LA studio wasn't far from MacArthur Park, which is a very deprived area, mainly home



Foreign (1), 2025



Foreign (1), 2025

Foreign (2), 2025



Hotspot, 2025

to the Latinx community. ICE was conducting daily raids there. From my studio, I was able to follow everything happening in the neighbourhood.

Hollywood is what most people know, but Los Angeles is more than anything a city of warehouses, peri-urban zones, roads, factories and the movement of goods and people. That's exactly what I enjoy navigating in order to source my materials.

Throughout my work, I try to bring together two opposing kinds of gesture: there are calculated, constructed, theoretical ones, like the large boxes in *Hotspot* (2025), which require a lot of drawing and model-making, and where I constrain the material through collage or cutting; and then there are simpler gestures, as in *Foreign I* and *Foreign II*, where I choose materials for their sculptural or structural qualities, or for their connotations, in order to reduce them to signs. The small metal pieces that make up *Foreign I* and *Foreign II*, for example, are from lengths of lead wire that evoke fishing hooks.

You can pick up on an arrangement of signs that points us towards a territory. There are also things that don't necessarily need to be verbalised, but rather felt. [...] *Foreign I* and *II*, for example, aren't fabric: they're large sheets of latex that were left exposed over the course of a season in the US, causing parts of their surface to lighten to varying degrees and form folds. I move around the sculpture to see where the material wants to go – unlike the structured works, where the plexiglass is cut and re-cut. There are gestures of construction, and perhaps a gesture of listening so that I can find out what the material wants to say.

After finishing *Foreign I* and *II*, I realised I'd reproduced a form I used to encounter every day a few years earlier, when I was living in Mexico, but had never photographed. A few streets from where I lived, there was a street shrine to the saints – I found it deeply enigmatic. I was convinced I'd taken a photo of it, but I actually never had.

In making these works, I was also thinking a lot about the concepts of the 'body politic' and the 'good life'.¹ For *Hotspot*, I used white beads to reference the structure of the three-strand necklace worn by Jackie Kennedy, who embodies the iconography of America's golden age. She has also been the subject of numerous Hollywood portrayals. A pearl forms when an oyster identifies a foreign body. It encases that intruder in layers of nacre to neutralise it. It's a strange act of sublimation. I chose misshapen pearls and arranged them across a surface of black velvet. The pearls are imperfect. They refer to damaged or non-conforming life trajectories, and to everything that falls outside the concept of the good life.

For my material, I chose light – a major philosophical concept in the Western tradition, because it embodies a paradox bound up with knowledge. In small amounts, light illuminates, opens up access to knowledge. But in excess it blinds us, preventing us from seeing.

Light also has a strong religious dimension, especially for Catholics, who take it as a reference to salvation and the soul. [...] Light is an electromagnetic wave which passes through objects without leaving a trace. That's why I also like working with sound in space. Light and sound are both flows of energy that pass through objects without leaving a trace, that inhabit and sculpt space.

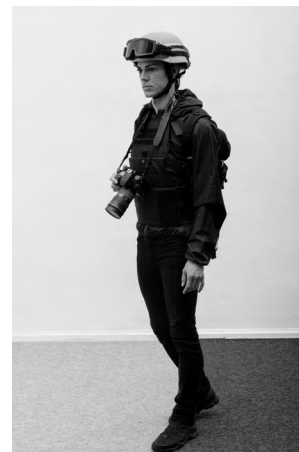
Los Angeles is a strange and conceptually interesting city. I noticed how important storytelling and self-narration are for the people living there. It's one of the many

consequences of neoliberalism, and something Jean Baudrillard was already examining in *America* (1986). People are always in motion, 'finding themselves' or 'becoming the person they're supposed to be'. Whatever age they are, they're in a state of perpetual transformation, driven by this idea of reaching a final version of themselves. There's a kind of poetry in this, I find, even if it's a double-edged sword. Often, unfortunately, it's about pursuing a form of the good life, or of a societal norm, that people feel they have to reach if they're going to feel fulfilled.

This is partly what Lauren Berlant theorises through her concept of 'cruel optimism', which itself has affinities with Lacan's *objet petit*. Cruel optimism is the paradoxical relationship between desire and its obstacle: the pursuit of an ideal or object that we remain attached to because it promises future happiness, even though it sometimes keeps that happiness out of reach. It's a concept that resonates with my work because, beneath the surface, it speaks to a state of ongoing friction and ambivalence between the life we dream of and the spaces we actually inhabit. It's that question of everyday endurance – of what keeps people going in the face of obstacles, and how easily they can lose sight of the sacrifices that kind of persistence demands. What is it that gets people through the day? Why do they put up with so much? What makes it worth carrying on?

Hélène Yamba-Guimbi was born in 1995 in Brittany, France and lives and works between Paris and Los Angeles.

Interview conducted on 17 March 2026
via video call by Alexine Taddei.



ANDRZEJ STEINBACH

UNTITLED (FROM THE SERIES "DER APPARAT")

2019

I've been interested in photographing the people around me since I was a teenager. At first, it was about documenting and building an archive of things I wanted to remember. Everyday things, ordinary life. Like the first friend of mine to get a phone and send a text — I took a photo of that moment. I was already imagining how interesting it would be to look back on years later.

I call my subjects figures. In German, *Figur* can mean the figure, as in English, but it can also refer to an actor or a fictional character. My figures are not real-life people, they are on stage. I understand them as prototypes in the scientific sense: something you try out that doesn't need to function right away.

It's not about representing identity, rather dissolving it and asking how bodies and gender perform. I'm a stage photographer.

I grew up in Chemnitz, in a working-class family and came to art through various subcultures — Antifa left-wing movements and punk. Some of the older people in the alternative scenes that I was interested in worked at the opera house, building sets. Through them I got a job as an extra and fell in love with punk and opera at the same time. The opera house in Chemnitz is right next to the museum, which once held a Munch retrospective. I knew nothing about art, but the poster caught my eye because it looked so dark and

menacing — like the punk and gothic records I had. I visited the exhibition which felt like an alien spaceship had landed. This was my first experience of being moved by images and art — I didn't understand it. The feeling of not understanding this visual language has stayed with me and remains behind my practice ever since. After graduating from art school, I realised that 'not understanding' had always been an interest of mine.

In Eastern Germany, queerness hadn't been absorbed by capitalism. It remained a counterculture, bound up with class struggle. My figures must fulfill a paradox — they must be individual, but they must also exist

as prototypes that stand for as many people as possible, which is impossible. Looking at our collective image history, it was always male figures that stood for universalism — I was always skeptical of the idea that you put a man there and he stands for everyone. The ambiguity is what interests me — and when people try to read my figures as androgynous or queer, that is itself a projection from the viewer. I want that reflection. Everyone has to see themselves reflected when looking at my figures.

The interesting thing about androgyny is that the question of 'what is it' will always remain. But the question itself is the problem — why does androgyny

have to be a category? Why does gender have to be a binary? I can say honestly that my work is not queer work; I can't represent that, I would say that it's rather post-queer – I understand that in the real world, gender still matters enormously. There are many struggles, many things left unresolved, but my figures inhabit a space beyond the real world – the studio, a stage, an experiment.

In German, the word 'Apparat' has three meanings: the machine, the body and the structure around it meaning the political apparatus. All these meanings collapse into each other. When you hold a large camera to your face, the machine covers your face and you can't see clearly; you have to close one eye to look through the other. In a way you see even less than you would with the naked eye. The apparatus is the body holding it and then, there is the apparatus in the larger sense – the structures that organise how we see and are seen.

I've always worked in both colour and black and white, but when a picture has colour, objects become more important than the image itself – you see the object before you see the picture. Because we don't see in black and white, working in black and white helps with abstraction; it helps reveal how an object is actually looks. I find grey interesting because it makes everything dissolve between the very bright and the very dark. I use colour as a recalibration – for a moment I lift the black-and-white filter, then put it back.

I believe music moves you more than visual art. When I look at something, it reaches me only through my eyes, but the organs that hear are inside the body. At a concert you feel the vibration of the speakers in your

chest. For me, the erotic comes from a love of form and I don't mean that in a sexual way but rather thinking of the psychology of images and the pleasure of being moved by them. The relationship between the erotic and power is strange. I find it structurally so counterintuitive, as in the idea that our most essential senses should be governed by something external. That's why I want to say it plainly: erotic images are not the same as sexual images. I love subject matter, I love context, but I also want to feel images.

From my experience teaching younger artists, I realised that they arrive with enormous potential, but the moment they enter art school they want to make something relevant. So they go looking for subjects that matter right now and they lose their love for things, for pictures, for images. They become far more focused on concepts but lose interest in the images themselves. I think that we need to pay more attention to form, not in a formalistic way, but in a way that comes from love. The images don't have to love me back, but I want what's best for them image.

Andrzej Steinbach was born in 1983, Czarńków, Poland. He lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Interview conducted on 25 March 2026, via video call by Caroline Honorien.

LEYLA YENIRCE

PLAYSTATION 5, 2022

The 1980s were a very musical decade, marked by electronic music and synthesizers. The noise I make as a musician comes from synthesizers too. I started with software, but I realized I prefer hardware, so I got some hardware synths. 'It's what I love with noise music is being able to twist the knobs, like in screen printing that I use in my painting, you physically feel the process. The way I encountered the music scene is also very performative — it's about experiencing together, being present, feeling it physically.

When I started painting in 2019, I was very active in the noise music scene of Hamburg. After that, I noticed — once I started to pick up the brush — that my painting is very noisy, because I was making music. I think this is why I chose oil colour, and this is why I chose a gesture of movement, like a body in a performance. I wasn't thinking about it so much as I can now more recall an urge to move and to do something analogue. It was an analogue drive that moved me towards painting.

'*PlayStation 5* (2022), executed in oil paint and using a screen-printing process, is part of a series of five paintings in the same format. I showed them, for the first time, in a show of twelve, but these five were displayed next to each other. I created them together, it really feels like an album. I feel this painting is one of the bangers because it's so loud. It's not the kind you encounter once and dream away with — but it's the one you turn to when you need power and energy

I chose the title *Playstation 5* of this painting after my little brother really fought to get his PlayStation 5. He saved up a lot of money, and it wasn't easy to get one. You had to be on a list and wait in line outside stores. The passion and effort he put into getting his PlayStation 5 was really inspiring to me.

I was also thinking of the PlayStation 5 as a kind of playground. It's like a game — a space for experimentation. For me, the canvas works in the same way: it's a format where I can explore and play. I like the idea that, just as the PlayStation lets you play different games, the canvas can be a playground for different possibilities.

At some point I started to do what I also do in my video art, where I sample found footage. I did the same in the painting that I do in my videos or in my music, where I sample found footage, interview snippets, a breath I hear somewhere. I sample, manipulate, and put it into my own composition. And I feel like with painting, I started to do the same at some point when I integrated screen printing, because that gave me the opportunity, or possibility, to work with phone footage. Then I started to layer screen printing with oil painting, and at some point I noticed that the canvas isn't just a PlayStation. It's also a surface, a format in which I can layer everything that informs my world.

I'm a big technology enthusiast, even if we live in a time in which it is used against us. I love it because when I started making music or editing videos, I could just crack a software and suddenly have endless possibilities. Recording music became accessible — I didn't need to go to an expensive studio or buy costly equipment. Everything was there for free.

This is also where my painting practice connects. With computers and the internet, I have access to images and tools to edit and program. Without that access, I couldn't make art the way I do now

For me, all of this becomes material — both physical and informational — that I try to navigate through and work with. In this particular series, I took a photograph of five Kurdish women [from YPJ] that I found online, and it really stuck with me because all five girls look at the girl in the middle, and they're in a moment of break — they don't use their guns. The guns are on the side or in their arms, but they don't shoot. They all look at the girl in the middle, who's writing a note.

And I thought, in my fiction — and this is the nice thing about art, you can fictionalize — I thought: oh, it's a girl band. It's a girl band, and they're writing a song. That was my fiction because I thought the nice thing about a break is that it's not so coded. On the front or battlefield, you have tactics and strategies; your moves are coded so you can navigate and collaborate with your peers. But in a moment of break, it's not so coded. And I thought maybe it is a break where they all write a song together.

So that is what the painting is. Then they're just somewhere floating in my brushstrokes, in the music, in the sound. They're very concrete: you can see their faces, you can see their hair, but you can also feel the noise.

With the YPJ, I'm very much interested in how these women at war are depicted. Usually, when we see them, they're young, they're pretty — we don't see the old, we don't see those disabled by war. I feel like when the women were fighting ISIS, they were also celebrated like pop stars. I'm also interested in this ambivalent moment of the Kurdish fighter as a pin-up, almost.

These photographs of Kurdish women fighting are accessible to me through media. *Why would I deal with this topic of war at a different place when I'm here in Germany and I'm safe?* It's because it's all transported to me through images. So it makes sense to deal with it through images. I do see that we are so flooded by images today that there is a numbness, right? You see something, you don't even notice it anymore. You forget it the next second. You feel like you're an image dump and you just scroll through it. For me, it's to have a deep encounter with an image again. I'm going to quote Georgia O'Keeffe here, who said, *seeing takes time*. For me, it's about really taking our time with one image. The girls in the photographs that I downloaded from the internet, I was screen printing through my paintings for a whole year. And I blew it up in different sizes. By the end of that confrontation, I knew every single detail of that image.

'It's kind of a strange moment where I spend so much time with the image of someone that I don't know, that I appropriated, but that I yet have a very strong relationship to because I look at it every day for a year, or as long as it's in my studio. And then I know that the person I'm printing is dead. So I ask myself — I think that is something I'm very interested in: how their death conditions my own vividness.

All the feminine figures, important historical and political figures from Kurdistan, that I work with in my painting — most of them who often died young or tragically — I feel it maybe comes from an anthropology of responsibility, where I feel like I have the chance to live and do my thing, so I have to do it, you know? Be in relation to them, I know that it's also a constructed relation, but it's interesting what that construction does for me. I feel almost like it's something that I... create an order to be really aware that every day counts, because their days were gone. And maybe it's also a fictionalized mode of operating as if I'm the one who's taking revenge.



Leyla Yenirce was born in 1992 in Beşiri, Kurdistan.
She lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Interview conducted on 10 March 2026,
via video call by Alexine Taddei.



4FSB

***Bluebell
Pigboy in Hell
At the Afters
Saint Shirley
Haus of Gugu
Clown Trauma Unit
Dolly
The Black Liturgy
Magda
Homogenic Mother
Lamb of Gawd
Divine Toad***

2025-26

I make one-off hand-dyed, bleached and painted baseball caps alongside digital images that advertise them. The hats and the images come from the instinct of letting the process stay visible. When I dye or bleach a cap I'm not trying to fully control it. The material reacts unpredictably; the dye spreads, the bleach eats into the fabric and the marks record the moment they were made. The toile of the hat behaves like a painting surface where the stain becomes the image.

Digitally I work in a similar way, but with phone apps instead of dye or bleach. Images are pushed through filters, compression and editing tools until they start to break down. Colours clip, faces stretch, textures become unstable. On the hats the imperfections come from chemical reactions with fabric, and digitally they come from pushing software beyond its intended use. In both cases the mistakes are the point.

I'm interested in moments in fashion where the body stops being stable and becomes something theatrical or strange. Punk and drag treated the body as something you could exaggerate, disguise or distort rather than present as natural. Leigh Bowery is a key figure for me, his work turned the body into a kind of living sculpture – grotesque, stylised and deliberate. Designers like Comme des Garçons also disrupted the silhouette so the body became unfamiliar. In my images transformation happens digitally; faces are stretched, filtered or replaced until they stop behaving like portraits and become closer to masks or characters. I'm interested in the moment where a face stops being an identity and becomes something that can mutate into something else.

Internet aesthetics move quickly. Styles that start out as rough or anti-polished – glitch edits, lo-fi images, 'shitpost' culture – get absorbed by platforms and reproduced at scale. Now AI can generate that kind of ugliness almost instantly, but what interests me isn't competing with that. Most of my images come from misusing tools – pushing phone apps slightly the wrong way, layering things together or over-processing an image until it behaves strangely. AI can reproduce the look, but not the process. Most of my work comes from pushing an image until it almost breaks.

Running the 4FSB page and curating shows feel closely related. Both are about arranging images so they start to speak to each other. Instagram works like a continuous exhibition; each post sits next to the others and gradually builds a visual environment. Curating a physical show does something similar, but with scale, space and bodies moving through a room. Working on the page made me very aware of sequencing, how one image leads to another. Curating exhibitions then made me think about what happens when those images leave the screen and become physical.

These images were made for a phone screen, where they exist in a fast and compressed environment. On Instagram they're small and disposable; you scroll past them in seconds. Printing them slows them down. When the image becomes large you start to notice the mechanics behind it: compression artefacts, distorted colours, glitches from the apps used to make it. The image doesn't really change, but the conditions around it do. Something made to move quickly through a feed becomes something you can stand in front of.

Jamie Bull (4fsb) lives and works in London, United Kingdom.

Interview conducted in writing on 5 March 2026.

CREDITS

Julian Schnabel
Hector, 1989

Mixed media on tarpaulin
Collection Mudam Luxembourg
Acquisition 1997 – Apport FOCUNA

Photo : Rémi Villaggi – Metz © Mudam Luxembourg

Rhea Dillon
Vexilla Onerosus, 2023

Oil and anti-climb paint on canvas
Courtesy of the artist and Soft Opening

Photo: Mareike Tocha © Mudam Luxembourg

Peter Halley
Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow, 1987

Four joined panels
Acrylic, fluorescent acrylic and Flashe on canvas
Collection Mudam Luxembourg
Acquisition 1998 – Apport FOCUNA

Photo: Mareike Tocha © Mudam Luxembourg

Hélène Yamba-Guimbi
Foreign (1), 2025
Foreign (2), 2025

Electric cord, fixtures, glue, latex, light bulbs,
Muji collection boxes, paper, photographs, wagos
Courtesy of the artist

Photo: Nicolas Brasseur

Hélène Yamba-Guimbi
Hotspot, 2025

Acrylic sheets, electric cords, fixtures, glue,
light bulbs, photographs, ring light, R7S light bulbs
Courtesy of the artist

Photo: Nicolas Brasseur

Joyce Joumaa
Periodic Sights, 2025

Temporary installation, inkjet prints on wove paper,
electrical enclosures, electronic timers, LED lights
Collection Mudam Luxembourg
Donation 2026 – Baloise

Exhibition view *Video Killed the Radio Star:
The 1980s and their Cultural Echoes*,
12.06 – 11.10.2026, Mudam Luxembourg
Photo: Mareike Tocha © Mudam Luxembourg

Andrzej Steinbach
Untitled (from the series Der Apparat), 2019

Fine art print
Courtesy of the artist and KIN, Brussels

Leyla Yenirce
PlayStation 5, 2022

Oil, acrylic spray and silkscreen ink on canvas
Collection Mudam Luxembourg
Long-term loan 2024 – Keith and Christiane
O'Donnell-Pommerell

Photo: Gunter Lepkowski © Mudam Luxembourg

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Bluebell
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Clown Trauma Unit
Dolly
The Black Liturgy
Magda
Homogenic Mother
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Divine Toad
2025–26

Prints on painted paper
Courtesy of the artist

Photo: Mareike Tocha © Mudam Luxembourg

**VIDEO KILLED THE RADIO STAR:
THE 1980S AND THEIR CULTURAL ECHOES**

12.06 — 11.10.2026

Mudam Luxembourg –
Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean

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Bettina Steinbrügge
with Caroline Honorien and Alexine Taddei

PRODUCTION TEAM

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Pedro Serrano, David Celli, Richard Goedert
STAGIAIRE : Lucie Chrétien

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