MENNOUR

LIAM EVERETT

THE SUN IS THEIR DRUM

JUSQU'AU · UNTIL 18 MAR., 2023
5 RUE DU PONT DE LODI, PARIS

untitled (in the shadow of Thales), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin · Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas. 134,6 x 198,1 cm

untitled (the turn), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin · Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas. 91,4 x 61 cm

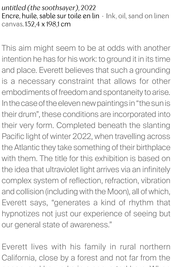
ENG What do you have, Liam Everett asked me recently, when the world falls away? When the ground, the sky, the trees, your home, the chair you're sitting on, the table before you, all of it, when it all ceases to exist? Not nothing—never nothing—but space, at least. Expansive space. And possibility.

Into that space something else can emerge.

Everett was talking about meditation, and his own daily practice of clearing psychic and imaginative space. But he was also talking about painting, and how and why his work ends up looking the way it does. His paintings, which I find uncomfortable, discordant, glitchy, restless, and permanently unresolved, are certainly not meditative, not in the usual sense of that word. They do not bring me calm; quite the opposite: they light a fire behind my eyes, and in my mind. They demand that I look closer, and be more attentive to what—and how—I am perceiving. They are hard work. And they are rewarding.

Everett has said that "Art should be about nothing," an idea, to me, more obstinately challenging than the commonplace, moralistic assertion of art's responsibility to mean something, of its duty of service to social and political efficacy. Everett's convictions are not politically derived, but philosophical: he is not interested in manifesting pre-existing ideas, formulated through language. Instead, he wants his art to forge a path into an otherwise inaccessible realm of phenomenological wilderness. "It should be an encounter with a U.F.O., an unknown object you have to work out how to come to terms with."

But nothing comes from nothing. A few years ago, Everett told me, he became uncomfortably aware of how his every mark, his every gesture, was mediated by the constant flow of stimulation around him. Learned language structures (virtually) all knowledge, and culture is threaded, like an invisible mycelium, around everything we can see or imagine. Everett considers this the "noise" he aims to silence in order to make his art. That is an impossible aspiration, he knows; "It will always be there, because no human can be human without the other. I can't erase that."



untitled (the soothsayer), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin · Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas, 152 x 198.1 cm

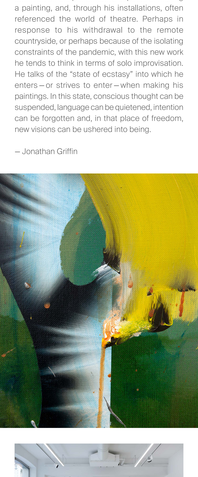
This aim might seem to be at odds with another intention he has for his work: to ground it in its time and place. Everett believes that such a grounding is a necessary constraint that allows for other embodiments of freedom and spontaneity to arise. In the case of the eleven new paintings in "the sun is their drum", these conditions are incorporated into their very form. Completed beneath the slanting Pacific light of winter 2022, when travelling across the Atlantic they take something of their birthplace with them. The title for this exhibition is based on the idea that ultraviolet light arrives via an infinitely complex system of reflection, refraction, vibration and collision (including with the Moon), all of which, Everett says, "generates a kind of rhythm that hypnotizes not just our experience of seeing but our general state of awareness."

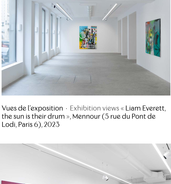
Everett lives with his family in rural northern California, close by a forest and not far from the ocean, and he works in a converted barn. When he moved into the space, he found all manner of tools that had been abandoned by the previous owner: saws, knives, axes, buckets, garbage cans, and other metalwork. He still regularly unearths such objects when digging his land. As with previous bodies of work, made in other studios that harboured different abandoned objects, here Everett arranges these items on his canvas and uses them as compositional devices, often misting ink or paint over them to reveal their silhouettes. He uses earth, dust and sand in a similar way, scattering it onto unstretched canvases placed on the floor. While his work clearly engages with the history of abstract painting, Everett does not think of it as abstract, but as almost painfully literal.

Titles, too, locate the paintings in the world of language, even if Everett insists that the words he appends to particular paintings have nothing to do with the external qualities of the work. To distinguish between one painting and another is mainly a practical convenience, he says. "I really see them all as different parts of the same process."

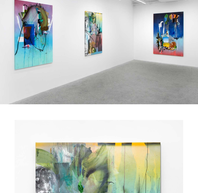
In earlier bodies of work, Everett focused our attention on the performative aspects of making a painting, and, through his installations, often referenced the world of theatre. Perhaps in response to his withdrawal to the remote countryside, or perhaps because of the isolating constraints of the pandemic, with this new work he tends to think in terms of solo improvisation. He talks of the "state of ecstasy" into which he enters—or strives to enter—when making his paintings. In this state, conscious thought can be suspended, language can be quietened, intention can be forgotten and, in that place of freedom, new visions can be ushered into being.

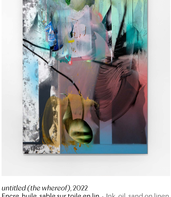
— Jonathan Griffin



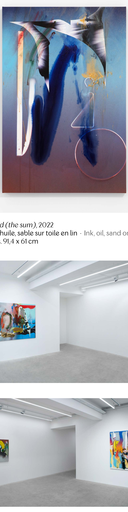


Vues de l'exposition · Exhibition views « Liam Everett, the sun is their drum » Mennour (5 rue du Pont de Lodi, Paris 6), 2023





untitled (the wheeler), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin · Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas, 94 x 149.9 cm



untitled (the sum), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin - Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas. 91,4 x 61 cm

LISTE DES ŒUVRES EXPOSÉES
LIST OF EXHIBITED WORKS

untitled (the soothsayer), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin - Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas
152,4 x 198,1 cm

untitled (in the shadow of Thales), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin - Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas
134,6 x 198,1 cm

untitled (the tum), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin - Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas
91,4 x 61 cm

untitled (cool memories), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin - Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas
94 x 149,9 cm

untitled (the whereof), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin - Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas
94 x 149,9 cm

untitled (the familiars), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin - Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas
129,5 x 198,1 cm

untitled (the sum), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin - Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas
91,4 x 61 cm

untitled (the divers), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin - Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas
94 x 149,9 cm

untitled (the call), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin - Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas
91,4 x 61 cm

untitled (as the tone drew away), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin - Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas
134,6 x 198,1 cm

untitled (the passenger), 2022
Encre, huile, sable sur toile en lin - Ink, oil, sand on linen canvas
94 x 149,9 cm

TRAILER DE L'EXPOSITION
EXHIBITION TRAILER

FR Né en 1973 à Rochester, New York, Liam Everett vit et travaille au nord de la Californie. Ses œuvres ont fait partie d'expositions au San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ; à la Biennale of Painting, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgique ; LC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive ; San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art ; CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco.
Liam Everett a reçu le SECA Art Award au San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2017), le Richard Diebenkorn Teaching Fellowship au San Francisco Art Institute (2013) et le San Francisco Artadia Award (2013). Ses œuvres font partie d'importantes collections publiques internationales, telles que celles du Metropolitan Museum of Art; New York ; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ; Dallas Museum of Art ; Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rennes, France ; Fondation Carmignac, Paris ; Kistefos Museum, Jevnaker, Norvège; Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive.

ENG Born in 1973 in Rochester, New York, Liam Everett lives and works in Northern California. His work has been included in exhibitions at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Biennale of Painting, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium; LC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art; CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco.
Everett is the recipient of the SECA Art Award at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2017), the Richard Diebenkorn Teaching Fellowship at the San Francisco Art Institute (2013) and the San Francisco Artadia Award (2013). Everett's work is included in significant international public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Dallas Museum of Art; Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rennes, France; Fondation Carmignac, Paris; Kistefos Museum, Jevnaker, Norway, and LC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archives.

Pour toutes les œuvres · All works :
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