

## Oliver Laric, Timelapse

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## Oliver Laric, *Timelapse*

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**SMAK  
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Though change affects all materials, much of what transpires cannot be seen. It is a condition that calls up that proverbial question: If a tree falls in the forest and no one hears it, does it make a sound? That proposition underlies *Timelapse*, Oliver Laric's contemplative exhibition. The presentation, which places an emphasis on the processes of evolution and decay, also explores the intervals of time and space and their role in the acquisition and interpretation of empirical information.

To formulate his perspective, Laric exhibited two types of artworks, having a layout that obliged viewers to navigate a double-looped circuit. Within this configuration, his video, *Untitled* (2021), not only constituted the presentation's introduction, but also its centre piece, fulcrum and balance point, as well as its conclusion. Viewers quickly discovered this, as they had to revisit the work every time they moved between the exhibition's two adjacent areas. This video work, a black and white animation, discloses a panoply of 3D-modelled life forms beset by diverse modes of change. The flow is expeditious, randomly ordered and presents a copious number of illustrations, interspersing close-up views of exoskeleton-shedding insects, twitching larvae and coiling worms with scenes of larger specimen afflicted by parasitical growths or swarming pests. And yet, despite the highly varied scope, a gradually emerging sense of constancy offsets the narrative's swift pace and indiscriminately ordered character. This was conferred visually through the consistent style used to render the organisms' contours and textures, as well as the white nothingness in which they hovered, and aurally through Ville Haimala's powerful soundtrack. The beat of his composition, which, like the video, played on ad infinitum, eventually undercuts the stream of diverse life forms by inducing an undeniable air of fate.

The sculptures making up the rest of the exhibition contrasted markedly with the video in terms of theme, mode of presentation and tone. The six works, conceived of as two versions of three themes, were evenly divided between two compact and identically configured suites of galleries on opposite sides of the immense viewing space given over to *Untitled*. Although SMAK's press release only featured an image from the video, it was impossible to anticipate what the adjacent galleries might hold. As such, coming upon Laric's replicas of historical sculptures turned out to be a remarkable experience. Given that each object had been placed in its own space and was judiciously illuminated not only enhanced the impact of one's initial impression, but it also recalled the respectful ambience bestowed on Nefertiti's Bust when viewed in Berlin's Charlottenburg Palace and the presentation of major historical works in other museums. At the same time, they offered a host of contrasting traits.

While Laric's replicas convey the general appearance of classical sculptures in terms of their stylistic attributes and subject matter, not to mention the physical characteristics that indicate their forebears had likely been carved out of marble, they also betray that material's weight, solidity and the naturally produced marks that tend to animate its surface. His works are distinguished by the fact that they have been 3D printed and incorporate a variety of components. His range of materials encompasses SLA resin, SLS Nylon, pigments, different kinds of powdered stone and more. These objects also sit on ultra-minimalist plinths made of aluminum rods. Such trim linear structures could, undoubtedly, not support the weight of solid marble. The character of these works made me want to know more about them, but they

were accompanied by the slimmest amount of didactic information. Actually, only careful scrutiny of the galleries' shadow-drenched walls made it possible to discover the works' rather plain titles, date of execution and material composition. And had I not bothered to search for any such details, I would likely not have noticed them.

Then imagine after viewing the first set of galleries, stepping into the second one and discovering versions of what appear to be the same three works, standing in the same positions, in similarly sized spaces and in the same kind of light, with the same barely visible information displayed on the walls. The sensation of déjà vu this mirroring created was not only powerful, but it also elicited a mix of consternation and doubt about what I was being shown. But time spent looking revealed that things were not what they seemed to be, with anomalies being more and less readily apparent. In one version of *Hunter and Dog*, 2020, the upper section of the hunter is clear and colorless, whereas the same area on its counterpart offers a mix of opaque material that is grey and silver. Consistency is simultaneously upheld and sabotaged in relation to *Ram with Human* (2021). While the overall forms of this pair of works generally mirror each other, the make-up of their four sections do not. Though these sections are distinguishable by virtue of each's colour, shape and the physical character of their surfaces, Laric has also jumbled up this range of features among them. This astute move has conferred a distinct, but easily missed, patchwork appearance to each sculpture that differentiates one version from the other. And then, if it hadn't been for the intriguing airiness, frangibility and semi-transparency conferred by their perforated white shells, *Pair of Dogs* (2021), may have ranked as the least interesting twosome—for they initially seemed to resemble each other far too precisely. But by inviting close scrutiny, which necessitated going back and forth more than a couple of times, disparities also were brought forward. In addition

to discovering that the size of the many holes that puncture each version's skin do not match, it could be seen that they do not mirror each other. In this case, Laric has cunningly chosen to replicate two very subtly different historical sculptures.<sup>1</sup>

Through this juxtaposition of static and time-based artworks, Laric has affiliated artistic perspectives and methods with natural phenomena to show that both embody continuity and irregularity as they evolve over time. He has then taken this view and reinforced it by calling attention to disparate kinds of imagery and technical processes, and how they have dwindled and can be revived. This richly complex synthesis of historical and contemporary information challenged viewers, urging them to engage their powers of observation, concentration, recollection, comparison and interpretation to the full. Ultimately, *Timelapse* speaks of the limits of human knowledge and how this plays out in the development of visual art.

1. Laric's website (threedscans.com) provides access to all his digital 3D models, notes their sources, and proves that one version of *Pair of Dogs* (2021) dates from 1st–2nd century and the other dates from the late 18th century.

John Gayer is a Helsinki-based artist and writer, who studied at the Ontario College of Art, the Banff Centre, University of Toronto and Queen's University. His exhibition reviews and artist interviews have appeared in *Sculpture Magazine*, *Paper Visual Art Journal*, *Art Papers* and, as a member of Art Association MUU's writing group, in relation to MUU Helsinki Contemporary Art Centre's program of exhibitions and events.

## Catherine Bolduc, *Cosmétique de la fin*

Hélène Brunet Neumann

**CENTRE D'EXPOSITION DE VAL-DAVID**  
**20 FÉVRIER –**  
**30 MAI 2021**

Les œuvres de l'exposition *Cosmétique de la fin*, inédites pour la plupart, révèlent une approche renouvelée de plusieurs explorations développées au fil des années. Le thème du volcan, pleinement assumé, prédomine et sert de liant entre les différentes propositions. Les codes et motifs des œuvres sur papier inspirent les formes sculpturales, mettant de l'avant la perméabilité des médiums.

Parmi les aquarelles sur papier, l'œuvre de grand format *La femme dans le paysage* s'impose d'emblée. Œuvre du premier confinement, l'artiste s'y est investie pendant qu'au-dehors, le temps semblait s'être arrêté.

Elle y exprime une sorte d'apocalypse du moment articulé entre le paysage et la parure vestimentaire. À la figure du volcan s'ajoutent des motifs de dentelles, du vernis à ongles, des parures. Un univers artistique suscitant une réflexion sur l'aberrance des solutions cosmétiques à des problèmes de fond, les artifices utilisés pour camoufler le passage du temps, le regard que les autres portent sur le vieillissement, plus particulièrement pour les femmes, et aussi, celui que l'on porte sur soi-même. On y retrouve force et fragilité. Ces questionnements et préoccupations sous-jacents aux œuvres sont traduits par le choix des matériaux et des motifs utilisés. À travers la légèreté expansive de l'aquarelle, l'opacité de l'acrylique, les traits de crayons, le brillant appareil du vernis à ongles jaillissent le dynamisme et le sentiment d'urgence que traduisent les formes volcaniques. Tantôt, la référence à la dentelle est accentuée par des œuvres aux contours découpés; plus loin, les cartes postales rehaussées au vernis à ongles présentent des mondes envahis par la lave en fusion. Si l'artiste suggère une réflexion sur l'artifice et l'urgence d'agir, ses œuvres dégagent plus de force de vie que de détresse. Pour Catherine Bolduc, l'art est là pour se questionner sur le sens des choses, sur l'expérience humaine. Elle avance : « est-ce que moi, comme artiste, j'ai des solutions pour améliorer le monde ? Je ne suis pas certaine. » Bien que l'acte de création soit forcément lié aux enjeux qui l'entourent, car il s'avère un