

Stoppenbach  
&  
Delestre

# Marine Wallon - Tasajera

2 November - 2 December 2023

Opening

2 November : 6-8 PM

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Stoppenbach & Delestre is pleased to announce the exhibition *Tasajera*, a solo exhibition of new works by Paris-based artist Marine Wallon, with an accompanying booklet and an essay by Estelle Marois.

*Tasajera's* exploration encompasses various concepts related to images and landscapes, intriguing the viewer through the deconstruction of conventional visual representations. It skillfully manipulates perspective and introduces a dynamic interplay among the elements within the scenes. This comprehensive exhibition includes a diverse collection of artwork, spanning paintings, watercolors, and experimental etching studies conducted in collaboration with Lucile Vanstaevel, an engraver associated with the Chalcographie of the Louvre. While Marine has long delved into the realm of landscapes, these works take it a step further by amplifying texture and color contrasts, challenging our role as mere observers and delving deeper into the geological strata of nature.

Geographer Denis Cosgrove defines landscape as 'the external world mediated through subjective human experience'<sup>1</sup>. As a genre, landscape painting originated in the 16th century and gained prominence in the 19th century – not only reflecting, but also preceding and shaping our perception of the living world. Exploring the bonds between art and ecology, a number of critics have noted how environmental aesthetics align with the impoverishment of our sensitivity to the world.

Despite this complex historical backdrop, Marine Wallon has chosen to work within the landscape painting genre, evident in her choice of toponymic titles for her works and exhibition. On her canvases, various forms can be identified as plains, crevices, mountains, cliffs, seas, and skies. Discreet landmarks structure the painting's spatial layout, such as the steady horizon line in *Gibara*, one of the exhibition's large-scale paintings, or recurring silhouettes and familiar objects. These elements work as linear scales defining the mathematical correlation between the terrain and its representation, in line with cartographic conventions. Indeed, Marine Wallon's deviation from the traditional understanding of 'landscape' is not primarily manifested through subject matter or compositional choices, but first and foremost through her approach to the medium.

In contrast to the textured areas, the densely applied flat tints subvert the principles of perspective. Instead of creating an illusion of depth unfolding from the viewer's eye, these forms appear to be adherent to the canvas surface, aligning their dimensions with the two-dimensional support. The contraction of proximity and distance reconfigures the way we engage with the landscape. We no longer enter the volume of the space depicted; we are instead ushered into a frontal, face-to-face relationship. The inclusion of sinuous or zebra-like diagonals – possibly rivers, rifts, or hairpin turns – accentuates the twist from the horizontal to the vertical, akin to ramps highlighting upward and downward movement.

Maintaining the appropriate viewing distance, as for the typical museum stroll, becomes a challenge when one's gaze struggles to find a focal point and slides in all directions. The landscape works as a screen. Erasing the distance, the flattening of forms conjures associations with the fantasy of ubiquity that characterises the digital era. Significantly, Marine Wallon draws inspiration from screenshots of tourist promotional videos, notably those beckoning exploration of the 'American West'. Beyond abolishing distance, the screen-interface thins the depicted object. The *Tasajera* massif, for instance, appears to be pierced by the ethereal light of the sky, as if its thickness were diluted. *Matahambre* overturns the cinematic trope of a cowboy sinking into the boundless Western sky. In the pioneer imagination, prairies and deserts were perceived as negative, vacant spaces to be conquered; however, within Marine Wallon's painting, by the repositioning of the silhouette, the human stumbles against an enigmatic, impenetrable landscape.

This screen-like landscape, standing erect, leads our gaze astray, resisting our efforts to impose a single, definitive understanding. It neither denies nor satisfies; the flattening of the landscape is a *Bartelby*-like technique of noncompliance, a refusal to be 'flattened' by interpretation.

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1. Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1998, p. 13

Hence, one might question the significance of the unaltered toponyms used as titles for the works: do they refer to real-world locations, or do pictorial and empirical spaces remain mutually inaccessible? While Marine Wallon is mindful of the lived experiences of places, her affinity for nomenclatural analogies and visual resemblances does not necessarily entail an identity of topography. For instance, the town of Tasajera does exist in Cuba, an island that the artist visited. The steep slopes of the massif and the curve of its summit are evocative of Cuban relief. Yet, the upper, thick, and streaked blue band is reminiscent of a Flemish sky. The reference to real-world locations is plausible yet uncertain, serving as a reading hypothesis, as a point of departure that opens up other interpretations instead of providing a definitive explanation. Marine Wallon's geography constructs a composite realm, comprised of overlapping and disparate realities.

Marine Wallon's model is, therefore, one of layering, resulting in a vertical landscape composed as a stratigraphic column; in other words, as a collection of sedimentary layers, whose cuts and larger groupings establish a geological time scale. In Marine Wallon's work, these striations function akin to strata, coalescing to create formations, such as patches of water in Gibara, Kayabi, or Singen, slopes flowing into the Ica talweg, or expansive sandy stretches in Hanö. The stratum, as elucidated by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, embodies an act of 'capture', consisting 'of giving form to matters, of imprisoning intensities or locking singularities'<sup>1</sup>. The tabular composition in Marine Wallon's landscapes encapsulates time within matter, crystallising the various moments it is made of as to show them simultaneously. Time here is that of the artist's work, for the striations are the hollowed-out inscription of her gesture, reminiscent of the techniques employed in engraving, a discipline the artist practices in the chalcography workshop at the Louvre. Her timescapes encompass an immensity of spatial and temporal dimensions, a feat typically achieved only through successive eye movements.

Nonetheless, petrification does not signify the cessation of motion. The interplay between the illusion of depth and the unity of flat surfaces creates an optical dynamic of push and pull. The relationships among the forms are fluid and evolving, animated by subterranean, tectonic movements. Much like a geological map showing the surface discordances that mirror deep-seated ruptures and disturbances in the Earth's crust, Osandon unravels the tremors, compressions, and contractions of matter, allowing us to contemplate the enigmatic and invisibles forces that inhabit it. Thus, another layered structure becomes apparent, one that pertains to the depth of the canvas, not in terms of the depicted landscape, but of the material itself. Radiant hues of yellow, fuchsia, emerald, and white coil within the furrows carved by the brush, shimmer across a fir-green substrate, burst through the thickness of a mountain, and shiver at the contours of the forms. These crevasses are not those that the perspectival eye cracks open within a passive scenery; instead, they manifest the seismic vitality of the painting, a vitality that may overflow the ossified landscape if we allow ourselves to be bowled over by the artworks that stand before us; whether by the effervescent sky in Ica and Tasajera, by the tumbling of an animal – suggested by the sparkle of an eye – disrupting

Osandon's nearly cadastral segmentation, or by the accidents invited by the artist's gesture within her compositions. Marine Wallon's works, volatile and unpredictable, engage with our vantage point, revealing its mobility, multiplicity, and contradictions.

**Estelle Marois** is a curator who works in both Paris and London. Her engagement in contemporary art intersects with her background in literature, psychoanalysis and the history of science.

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1. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p.





Marine Wallon  
*Tasajera*, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
170 x 240 cm







Marine Wallon  
*Gibara*, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
200 x 160 cm









Marine Wallon  
*Matahambre*, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
80 x 100 cm







Marine Wallon  
*Osandon*, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
40 x 55 cm



Marine Wallon  
*Jagüey*, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
55 x 40 cm





Marine Wallon  
*Thalat*, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
40 x 55 cm





Marine Wallon  
*Tecopa*, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
40 x 55 cm





Marine Wallon  
*Kanjiroba*, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
30 x 38 cm





Marine Wallon  
*Hanö*, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
20 x 27 cm





Marine Wallon  
*Koës*, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
20 x 27 cm

# About the artist

Born in 1985, Marine Wallon graduated from the Beaux-Arts in Paris in 2009. Her work has been exhibited at gallery exhibitions including Galerie Catherine Issert, Saint-Paul-de-Vence; Stoppenbach & Delestre, London UK; Under Construction, Paris; and in art centers including Annecy, Büdelsdorf, Troyes. Her work is featured in public and private collections (Collection du Musée du Louvre Chalcographie, Fondation Colas, Ville de Vitry-sur-Seine dépôt MAC VAL, Artothèque d'Annecy, Fonds Moly-Sabata, Collection Société Générale).

In 2022, Marine Wallon was the laureate of the 11th Jean-François Prat Prize chaired by Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo. She won other painting prizes such as the Moly-Sabata Prize at the 64e Salon de Mon-trouge (2019), Colas Foundation Prize (2020), 3rd Antoine Marin Prize (2018), November International Painting Prize in Vitry (2017), Print and Paper Prize SMFA Boston (2008).

In 2022, she realized a colour-etching for the Chalcographie du Louvre commissioned by the Louvre Museum et Réunion des musées nationaux – Grand Palais.

In 2023, she was nominated for the Drawing Now Prize.

## **Solo exhibitions include :**

Plus haut tremble, CAC Passages Troyes (2023); Purple Lime, Stoppenbach & Delestre (London, UK 2021); Brasser carré, Galerie Catherine Issert (Saint-Paul de-Vence, 2021); Discordance de la courbe, Le Point Commun (Annecy, 2019).

## **Selected group exhibitions include:**

Voir en peinture, MASC Sables d'Olonne, Musée Estrine et Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dole (2023); We Paint, Beaux-Arts de Paris (2022); 11th Jean-François Prat Prize, Bredin-Prat Fund, Paris (FR 2022); FIAC OVR, Galerie Catherine Issert (FR 2021); Some of us, Kunstwerk Carlhütte, Büdel-sdorf (DE 2019); 64e Salon de Montrouge (FR 2019); Le soleil se lèvera demain, Wonder-Liebert, Bagnolet (FR 2018); Payne Whitney Mansion-Ambassade de France, New York (FR 2017); Matin, midi et soir, Honoré Visconti, Paris (FR 2016); Saxifraga Umbrosa, La Générale en Manufacture, Sèvres (FR 2014); La Belle Revue-In Extenso, Mac/Val, Vitry-sur-Seine (FR, 2014).