



## thomas liu le lann

## ZIWEN, YOU DESERVE ALL THE FLOWERS THAT STILL GROW ON EARTH

Exhibition from July 5 to August 3, 2019 Opening on Thursday July 4, from 6 to 10 pm Rue des Bains 61, 1205 Geneva

Galerie Xippas is pleased to present an exhibition by artist Thomas Liu Le Lann. For his first exhibition at Galerie Xippas, he will present a collection of sculptures and paintings created especially for this occasion.

The title, Ziwen, you deserve all the flowers that still grow on earth, resonates like an intimate poem from the artist to his fiancé, for which the entire exhibition is dedicated to. This sentence, proclaimed like a declaration of love, also has a catastrophic dimension and states the arrival of a disaster. Love and urgency, beauty and catastrophe, this exhibition is a portrait of the artist's loving relationship with Ziwen, a representation of their common life.

The second exhibition room features a large «soft sculpture» called *THOMAS* that fills the entire space. This sculpture is in the same line as his previous creations achieved over the last three years. Thomas Liu Le Lann focuses on the elaboration of finely crafted fictions, directly inspired from the popular culture. In this way, he creates these «soft sculptures» installed on the ground, characters without faces or expressions, whose only visible attitude seems to have given up on the world around them. These gigantic characters are soft, sometimes bordering on formless, like overwhelmed and weary modern superheroes.

Thomas Liu Le Lann is a French artist born in 1994, he lives and works in Geneva. In 2018, he won the HEAD - Gallery Award. By awarding this prize, Galerie Xippas offers him the opportunity to present his work in an exhibition open to the public within its spaces in Geneva. That same year, he won the New Heads Award - BNP Art Awards Foundation, which allowed him to present a solo show at Musée des Beaux Arts du Locle and on the BNP Foundation's booth at artgenève. Among his solo exhibitions, *ShowDown* at Musée des Beaux Arts du Locle (Le Locle, Switzerland), *i'm not okay* at Galerie Vin Vin (Vienna , Austria) and *19.07* at Maladie d'Amour (Grenoble, France). He has participated in group shows, such as *Henry Darger Summer Camp* designed by Extramentale (Arles, France) and *Plattform#19* at the Centre d'Art Contemporain - Yverdon les Bains (Yverdon les Bains, Switzerland).



Gangs of players, props and backdrops define the staged and the stages of life, even in apocalyptic times. Who and what surrounds one (through ambition, misfortune and luck) and how this is outwardly presented is central to the dreams, nightmares and limbos that one creates and inhabits. Thomas Liu Le Lann's fragile materials and rigid forms create reciprocal scenes between the theatre of the gallery and the public exposure of his personal life and fantasies. The loving and fucking of those close and chosen are central to the abstracted avatars he presents to his audience. Always informed by sex (and, therefore joy), yet never linear or illustrative, the works are at times rough, tender, humorous, seductive and very nearly always a bit horny. They contain codes and bedside secrets revealed, I suspect, in whispers and moans. His commitment to craft is a seductress forcing a focus on the material transformations elegantly executed of the artist's own scenes; set and lived.

Take the vinyl fabrics and hard plastic accessories in a series he sewed and stuffed. Lanky, glossy abridgments of Astro Boy, a central figure in Asian and, more recently, global popular culture lay draped and casual in exhibition spaces. Kinky in their existence and near perfect in handmade execution, Liu Le Lann tackles an enduring stereotype of homosexual narcissism as they act as stand-ins for lovers and himself (the self-portrait dramatically larger than all others). A recent work saw an arcade claw-machine filled with small take-home versions, spreading himself or other partners around as prizes to an anonymous public. At other times they're weapons (machine guns, hunting knives, machetes) whose ridges and phallic extensions force the mind towards the ergonomic and penetrative. Brutal, not just for the connotations of military violence but, for the way they mimic the possible playthings of advanced insertion enthusiasts. Violence made soft, rather than soft violence and, yet, none are flaccid - all filled to firmness in a permanent bodily echo.

Dichotomies exist throughout: soft/hard, rigid/loose, dom/sub, narrator/character. Look at his exploration of masculine tools and figurative stand-ins trading textile for glass. A rabbit titled for his boyfriend, is translucent and fleshy, in total opposition to the straight man's metallic art rabbit of the 1980s. A hanging chainsaw, in the same material, is aggressive not as the cinematic Texas massacre, but more tender in the way of skin retracting over a head aroused. Glass balls on hooks continue an interest in the aesthetics of BDSM: the bondage butt plug as high interior coat hanger. Aesthetics that bridge bedrooms and communities. Clear and bulky, their glass material remind us of a fragile existence, love and art ready to shatter if momentarily mishandled.

Temporary pleasures transformed to the permanent are everywhere. The flowers delivered to the artist's home each week are embalmed in paintings. Ones to promise to a lover, but enjoyed by oneself. For all its preaching of polyamory and getting around, this work is an artistic love letter from deep inside a relationship. It's a confirmation to the outside, for all to see. But, that can also be the end of the world.