

# Mathieu Cherkit

## Time's Up?

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Press release



Mathieu Cherkit  
*Équilibre*, 2022  
Oil on canvas  
230 x 180 cm  
Courtesy of the artist  
and Xippas gallery

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Xippas is pleased to present Mathieu Cherkit's first exhibition in its Parisian gallery. Entitled "Time's Up?", the exhibition will feature fifteen new paintings, addressing the notion of time while underlying the artist's interest in interior spaces and nature.

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The longer you play this game called life, the more you feel like you're actually free to do your own thing and not obliged to act by any preconceived rules. You don't feel like you need to explain yourself, but if somebody is interested, you'd be happy to tell them exactly what you're thinking. And such a shift of mindset has been happening in Mathieu Cherkit's life as well as his artistic practice to the point that his 6th Parisian solo show and a debut solo presentation with Xippas is entitled *Time's Up?* Embracing and thoroughly enjoying this new perception, but also aware of the unceasing ticking of a life clock, the artist is now looking at his most imminent surroundings with a more refined sense of appreciation, while discovering meaningful and evocative metaphors that are sitting hidden in plain sight.

Over the years, Cherkit has established his own universe built from depictions of his close-by environment, both the different angle views of the home interior and his lush garden. While entering his forties, his interest in painting spaces and creating a sense of dimensionality on a flat surface has evolved into a more profound observation of the time and how it influences the progress and demotion of life on a personal and global

scale. Working from life or memory, these existing locations are used for documenting personally significant moments related to his family and child (*Le Complot*, 2022), but also, for touching on greater concerns such as environmental issues by portraying the family garden in the scorching heat (*Fire Drill*, 2022). The love for nature, life, and its special little moments extend all the way to the ongoing series of small-scale works which comprise the continuously growing visual herbarium. Depicting a solitary example of a plant from his garden and entitling it with its Latin name (*Hypochaeris radicata*, *Hyacinthus*, both 2022), these works are also preserving the collecting and cataloging tradition of his pharmacist family background while being the most obvious demonstration of his love for painting as a medium. As a fan of its tangible, material quality, the excessive amounts of paint are used to create these precious vignettes, making sure this particular way of conservation and documentation has a distinctive quality in comparison to, let's say, photography or illustration.

Awareness about the temporality of every aspect of life comes to the surface through the portrayal of mostly empty domestic interiors in which common inanimate objects appear as if they're undergoing some sort of metamorphosis. This is done by purposely rejecting the rules of dimensionality and depth, playing with scales, shifting colors, or adding the elements of narrative, all of it done with slabs of thick, overflowing paint. Living closely with his subject, Cherkit is able to notice the most subtle nuances and changes that can then steer the direction in which his work will be developing. Sometimes alternating the given scene to complement the change of the composition affected by an unexpected placement of an object (*Hat Tricks*, 2022), sometimes breaking the image into sections to convey the passage of time and the correlated light play (*Equilibre*, 2022), or even portraying himself in a ready-to-fight pose that evokes the competitive atmosphere in the global painting scene (*La grande bagarre*, 2022). And regardless of his focus of interest or the problem that needs solving, the possibility to adjust, skew and distort the reality is stubbornly used as a method to create a fitting composition, achieve the balance of depicted elements, and capture different temporalities in one image. At the same time, this melancholic unity of often wonky elements is hinting at life at large, pragmatically conveying the tendency for things to go askew as the clock is ticking. By questioning Time's up? Cherkit is revealing his excitement about being a part of the big game, but also, suggesting a clear understanding of the definite nature of existence.

– Saša Bogojev

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Born in 1982 in Paris, Mathieu Cherkit lives and works in Vallery, France.

Mathieu Cherkit is a major figure of the emerging French generation of figurative painters, now exhibited internationally. The inspiration for his works comes mainly from the house where he lives. With one floor and a garden that he cultivates, his residence there serves as a pretext to explore multiple subjects, embodied by trinkets, childhood memories, his recent paternity, or even art works that surround him. It also allows him to approach the subject of painting itself and its power to dismiss realism in order to describe a personal universe.

In his colorful works, loaded with oil paint which spills over from the stretcher, Mathieu Cherkit thwarts the principles of central perspective. He mixes viewpoints with the aim of creating different spaces and temporalities and bringing to life the architecture and the objects that he lives with.

Mathieu Cherkit is a finalist of Jean-François Prat Prize, as well as of the Science-Po Prize for contemporary art and Antoine Marin Prize.

Public collections: Fondation Salomon, Alex, France, Musée des Avelines, Saint-Cloud, France, CNAP. Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, France Fondation Colas, Paris, France, Caldic Collection/Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, Netherlands.

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Born in Croatia (Rijeka, 1978) Saša Bogojev lives and works in the Netherlands. Over the years he has collaborated in various international publications and media and is especially known for his curatorial work and a long-term relationship with Juxtapoz magazine, where he has been contributing editor and European correspondent for many years.

Since 2016, Bogojev started curating exhibitions in galleries and institutions around the world, such as "Lost In A Spectacle", WOAW Gallery, Beijing (2022); "Domesticity", Volery Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2021); "8th Ply", The Garage, Amsterdam (2020); "Melancholympics", The Wunderwall, Antwerp, Belgium (2020); "ME", High Line Nine, New York (2020); Julio Anaya Cabanding's solo show "Unstolen, Tales Of Arte", Imola, Italy (2019); "New Classics", Galerie COA, Montreal (2019); Mike Lee's solo show "Happier Together", Amala Gallery, Tokyo (2017), five iterations of his ongoing "Universes" series held in Imola, Amsterdam, Hong Kong, Paris, and NYC, and has been a curator of CAN art fair in Ibiza.

Bogojev also wrote numerous press releases for exhibitions worldwide and has contributed to many books, such as Mu Pan's "American Fried Rice: The Art of Mu Pan", Vladimir Manzhos Waone's "Worlds Of Phantasmagoria", Jean Jullien's "Lesconil", and Justine Otto's "New Traditionalists", to name a few.