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Press Release

PATRICK KIM-GUSTAFSON & LAURENT PERNOT It's beautiful you would've seen – and it's all around

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Booth D14

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For its fourth year participating in Art Paris, Galerie Marguo is thrilled to present *It's beautiful, you would've seen - and it's all around*, a duo exhibition of two Paris-based artists: Patrick Kim-Gustafson and Laurent Pernot.

Featuring a new series of Pernot's wood and marble marquetry landscapes along with an assembly of Kim-Gustafson's sculptural furnishings and objets d'art, the works on view are united in their respective approaches to the tenet "truth to the nature of materials." This value - that natural materials have their own laws and energies which work on our senses - was espoused by William Morris, figurehead of the British Arts & Crafts Movement that arose out of the rampant industrialization of the Victorian era and sharply critiqued its alienation of people from the organic rhythms of their time, labor, and materials that had hitherto shaped their lives. *It's beautiful, you would've seen - and it's all around*, stakes out a similar position, amidst a major shift in temporality, labor, and relationship to materiality induced by the rise of technology. Through their unique use of oak, both Kim-Gustafson and Pernot present works that contest the increasing immateriality of our present and engage with notions of deep time as it is imbued in wood and stone, conjuring the eternal cyclicity of nature, seasons, and matter.

A trained industrial designer and former furniture, fixtures, and equipment designer, Patrick Kim-Gustafson founded the Montreuil-based Ateljé Loupchat in 2020, returning to the practice of woodworking that surrounded him growing up in his native Sweden. Exploring a reversal of the values he was professionally educated in, Kim-Gustafson begins each piece with a solid block of oak, privileging a tactile, intuitive, and subtractive way of honing the wood, counter to the logic of efficiency and primacy of function borne software-designed items, and the general culture of disposability that surrounds our relationship with objects. The result is a series of “completely anarchic” and paradoxically utilitarian pieces that hover between sculpture and furniture: a 1,80m long bench with room for only one buttock carved slightly to the right, or say, an 80kg plinth-like form that flutes upwards on its surface to hold a single pen. Vases and vanity mirrors likewise are imbued with a renewed sense of autonomy - what were once originally 130-year-old ceiling beams, decommissioned and left to rot at a scrapyards, have been salvaged and reforged by Kim-Gustafson. Meanwhile, certain pieces are finished using the Japanese technique *shou sugi ban*, a charring process which thoroughly blackens the material, simultaneously transforming and preserving it as a natural sealant. Kim-Gustafson afterwards applies a personal technique by layering and treating the wood with ferric acetate to further enrich its darkened color.

This ontological paradox is picked up in Laurent Pernot’s series of landscapes, which are meticulously composed of inlaid burnt and painted oak, sourced scraps of marble, gold leaf, and brim with the subtle tension of contrasting temporalities and temperatures inherent to these materials. Working across sculpture, video, painting, and text, Pernot’s practice is driven by a Romantic impulse to synthesize the monumentality of nature and historical time through the subjectivities of the individual. His work addresses themes such as eternity, impermanence, memorialization, and the endurance of love. Featuring a spectrum of seasons and weathers in a palette of tertiary colors, these compositions are alternatively drawn from Pernot’s archive of personal photographs, paintings by early 20th century artists Leon Spilliaert and Nicholas Roerich, and Japanese iconography. The paintings explore life cycles across geologic time, continuously evoking, in both material and subject, the elements of water, earth, snow and fire. From the abstract still life of Warholian Papaver californicum, commonly known as fire poppies, which grow in oak woodlands and other ashy habitats that have recently burned, to the stone-cold birds flying amongst the barren trunks of a winter’s forest, each tableaux offers a wistful yet optimistic vista of the state of our current ecological crisis - memento mori of the dialectical nature of destruction and rebirth.

Romanticism emerged synchronously alongside the Arts & Craft Movement, both seemingly propelled by a sentimental turn - an insistence on emotion, perception, and the inextricability of man and his surroundings - in the face of an increasing acceleration and atomization of society.

In Tao Lin’s 2021 novel, *Leave Society*, the protagonist, Li, a recovering amphetamine addict obsessed with detoxifying from the ills of Western society, writes of the benefits of being surrounded by nature. “Forests, mountains, seashores, and waterfalls have tens of thousands of anions per cubic centimeter.” Anions are negatively charged ions that act as natural dust and air purifiers. City streets, he continues, have about fifty. Air-conditioned rooms have zero. The narrator continues, “below a thousand impaired cognition and slowed physical recovery.” The healing properties of immersing oneself amongst trees - otherwise known as silvotherapy or forest bathing, have been promoted since antiquity. In Japan, Shinrin-yoku (forest bathing) was coined and promoted by the government in 1982 as a means of managing stress and burn-out in the population, in response to rapid urbanization and technological advances. And while an art fair is of course a far cry from a forest, *It’s beautiful, you would’ve seen - and it’s all around* presents a dialogue of sculpture and paintings informed by the ligneous truth of their materials. One has only to come close to discover what they have to say.

About the artists

Patrick Kim-Gustafson (b.1986, Sweden) is a Swedish designer currently based in Paris. He holds an MFA in Industrial Design from Lund University, Sweden (2012) and has worked as a Creative Director and Graphic/Industrial design consultant for a host of design firms and companies, ranging from Michael Young Ltd. CNN, Substance, VOID Watches, and S+ / Philippe Starck. In 2020, Kim-Gustafson founded Ateljé Loupchat in the Lot region of France, which he now currently operates in Montreuil.

Laurent Pernot (b.1980) lives and works in Paris. He earned an MA in Photography and Multimedia from Paris VIII University, and attended Le Fresnoy National Studio for Contemporary Arts, Tourcoing, France. Pernot has exhibited widely in France and abroad, and has been the recipient of many public art commissions. Recent solo exhibitions include: 'L'instant d'une vie', Château Malromé (2022, Saint-André-du-Bois); 'Compared with one moment of love', 4x4 project, RX Gallery (2021, Paris); 'I am looking for a place where nobody ever dies', Pavillon Vendôme (2021-21, Aix-en-Provence); 'Titans', espace 36 (2019, Saint-Omer); 'The land where trees dream', Place Royale (2017, Nantes); and 'A Fraction of Infinity', Moscow Museum of Modern Art (2015, Moscow). Select group exhibitions include: 'Le vent se lève', MAC VAL (2021, Vitry-sur-Seine); 'Blooming', Domaine Pommery (2021, Reims); 'Métamorphoses', Maison des Arts, (2020, Chevilly-Larue); 'The moon', Grand Palais (2019, Paris); 'Dans l'atelier - la création à l'oeuvre', Musée Eugène Delacroix (2019, Paris); and 'Processus, Espace 13/16, Centre Pompidou (2017, Paris).

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Left: Patrick Kim-Gustafson
Double barrel flower vase, 2024
French oak, burnt, brushed, ebonised and burnished
97 x 20 x 29 cm (38 x 7 7/8 x 11 3/8 in)
Vase diameter: 3 cm (1 1/8 in)

Right: Laurent Pernot
The shadow tree, 2024
Burnt wood and painting
120 x 90 cm (47 1/4 x 35 3/8 in)
122 x 92 cm (48 x 36 1/4 in)