

Aesthetica Magazine's blog keeps you up-to-date with art news from around the world.

[Visit our main site](#)

Articles

All
Art & Design
Artists' Directory Insights
Book
Fashion
Film
Music
Performance
Photography
Sculpture

Archives

Type and hit enter

S O C I A L C O D E S



Review of Social Codes, Yannick Fournié and Cyril Le Van, Paris

The theme of contemporary dress codes was suggested by the Galerie Géraldine Banier who then proceeded to contact two French artists who would dovetail for a harmonious exhibition. The two artists chosen, both born in the 1970s, could hardly fit better together and still remain distinctive. Both have a strong interest in the gaudy surfaces of pop culture and a need to plough and harrow smooth exteriors. Yannick Fournié's oil-painted figures have weathered skin, battered and mottled by age and embattled emotions. It comes as no surprise to learn that his painterly heroes are Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud and Egon Schiele.

On closer inspection, Cyril Le Van's apparently brighter, smoother sculptures reveal themselves to be discreetly rough-textured and suggestive of inner turmoil. Le Van's soft shapes are as pliant, and often more so than the objects they imitate and yet each is assembled not in a seamless fashion but with staples grafted on irregularly and in unnecessary places, giving an impression of aggression and self-inflicted pain.

Aesthetica

Blog

Aesthetica Magazine's blog keeps you up-to-date with art news from around the world.

[Visit our main site](#)

Articles

All
Art & Design
Artists' Directory Insights
Book
Fashion
Film
Music
Performance
Photography
Sculpture

Archives

Type and hit enter

[↑](#) Back to Top

On closer inspection, Cyril Le Van's apparently brighter, smoother sculptures reveal themselves to be discreetly rough-textured and suggestive of inner turmoil. Le Van's soft shapes are as pliant, and often more so than the objects they imitate and yet each is assembled not in a seamless fashion but with staples grafted on irregularly and in unnecessary places, giving an impression of aggression and self-inflicted pain.

Yannick Fournié's work has always been centrally focused on masks and half-masked figures. In 2012, his keen interest in sport (he was himself a paratrooper in the army and a professional swimmer) led him to paint a series of a female swimmers in bathing caps and goggles. Some of them are so successful they attain the mysteriousness of an Odilon Redon religious painting. Other semi-masked figures include comic-strip superheroes and the figures in the current exhibition focus on Mexican wrestlers who hide their facial identities behind cage-like enclosures. A number of the paintings depict Blue Demon, a Mexican wrestler who never appeared without his mask and asked to be buried with it on. Fournié's ultra virile downs seem to suggest a hidden secret and some of his paintings stay with you after you have left the show. Others portraying Mafiosi with cellphone and gun seem merely repulsive. The mirroring between those two accessories, making the phone as sinister as the gun, are visually uninteresting once the link has been made.

As a compulsively acquisitive collector, Cyril Le Van takes photographs of the objects he possesses thus making his artistic endeavors an extension of his hobby. He then proceeds to print these photos onto tarpaulin, cutting out the shapes and sewing them together with ordinary office staples. Rows and rows of shoes greet you in the window of the gallery making the space look like a cross between a museum and a trendy shop. Le Van's plastic clothes make a nod at the first pop artists with Campbell Soup dresses and pleather Keith Haring T-shirts. There's also a winsome plastic vending machine with printed plastic chocolate bars and beverages.

The show is a cheerful venue, despite its slightly painful underpinnings, and although it makes no claims to radically rework first-wave Pop Art, it does give it an extra edge. A bit like what Andy Warhol tried to achieve by spiking his work with a bit of Basquiat.

Social Codes can be seen at the [Galerie Géraldine Banier](#), 54 rue Jacob, 75006 Paris until June 29.

Erik Martiny