

PRESS RELEASE

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Jean Vincent Simonet*Uniques*

4 May – 10 June 2024

Messums West



Pocket Perception 215, 2024. Inkjet print on plastic foil, 57 x 48 cm.

This exhibition presents a new series of unique still life images by French photographer Jean-Vincent Simonet following his successful solo exhibition at Messums London last year. His work will also be presented at Photo London from 16 – 19 May at Somerset House (stand number A04).

Each of these photographs is a unique artwork, created in a process that is closer to painting or sculpture, perhaps even performance. Jean-Vincent Simonet might be described as something of a maverick, creating pictures that work in all of these mediums: photography, sculpture, and painting. His particular approach is a result of his family heritage and his fascination with the process that goes into image making. Simonet began to understand that through using heat, humidity and different drying methods, he could transform, erase, vanish, almost sculpt the surface of a print. The physicality of Simonet's involvement, and the gestural expression he brings to each work lead to confidently resolved singular images, unique prints

from a process that cannot be directly replicated. This creative and distinctly individual approach places Simonet as a new thinker in the vanguard of contemporary photography.

Simonet's new botanical sequences on display exemplify the particular and unique vision of his practice. Drawing inspiration from nature and its abundant variation, not immediately apparent to the natural eye, this series was born out of his interest in greenhouses found throughout the UK. He explains that "greenhouses are microbiomes in themselves, human-made to produce particular unnatural results." With this inspiration in mind, he revisited various locations, searching for images that could undergo a process of organic liberation and transformation. From the lush landscape of the UK to the vibrant flower markets of Hong Kong, Simonet breathes life into constrained environments, infusing them with a hybrid vitality. In particular, his work often focuses on overlooked aspects of the ecosystem, such as vegetation bound in industrial landscapes. Works such as *Pocket Perception 25* and *Pocket Perception 26* are distortions of trees found on a busy roadside in Nepal, buried under dust, debris, and rubbish from a nearby construction site. Simonet describes these trees as survivors, struggling in a man-made environment to co-exist. Attracted to these qualities, they are reinvigorated, revived and immortalised through his photographic and printing process.

According to Simonet, the printing process is a form of liberation through gesture; brush-like strokes disrupt the print's surfaces, a form of quick and deliberate destruction that emphasises the oddity of vision. Each print challenges the viewer to question what the image is, how it was made and where it was taken. At the core of Simonet's work lies a fascination with retinal persistence — the fleeting moments of visual memory that linger in the mind's eye after a particularly harsh light when the eye is closed. By harnessing the fluidity of photographic imagery, he blurs the boundaries between reality and illusion. The viewer is continually asked to reconsider what they are viewing and why, an antidote to the constant stream of imagery present in the digital age.



*Pocket Perception 11, 2024.
Inkjet print on plastic foil, 57 x 48 cm.*

*Pocket Perception 13, 2024.
Inkjet print on plastic foil, 57 x 48 cm.*

ABOUT

Jean-Vincent Simonet (b. 1991) graduated from École cantonale d'art de Lausanne in 2014. His practice fuses analogue images, digital techniques, collage, montage, sculpture and painting with remarkable fluidity. His work is permeated by a sense of overload and exuberance and characterised by a penchant for sheer entropy.

Body and decor, nature and artifice, poses and emotions collide and merge into the poetics of excess that forms the basis of the artist's research. His practice pushes the poetics of chaos to the very limits of the photographic medium.

Simonet has exhibited in some of the renown institutions and galleries such as Centre de la photographie Genève, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Cabaret Voltaire Zürich, Villa Noailles Hyeres, FOAM Amsterdam, Webber Represent London, Fondazione Vico Magistretti Milan, Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle etc. His work could be found in various private and public collections such as Vontobel Art Collection, FOAM Amsterdam, LUMA or Swiss Post.

Simonet is based in Paris and Zurich where he juggles between commissioned photography, editorial and personal explorations.

PRESS

For further information and press images, please contact: press@messums.org

ABOUT MESSUMS – MESSUMS WEST, MESSUMS LONDON AND MESSUMS ORG

MESSUMS WEST: Established as Messums Wiltshire in 2016 by Johnny Messum, Messums West is a leading multi-purpose gallery and arts centre set inside a restored thirteenth-century tithe barn with surrounding buildings, exhibition space, sculpture garden and restaurant.

MESSUMS LONDON is a 2,000 sq ft exhibition space on Cork Street behind the Royal Academy. It hosts a rolling programmed of exhibitions for our contemporary artists.

Under the umbrella **MESSUMS ORG**, the business continues to evolve the role of the gallery from presentational space to one that offers multiple ways to access, experience, understand and engage with the creative process and its outcomes. This has included establishing a

network of venues and arts communities in the West and East of England – as well as connecting with our historic London gallery space, MESSUMS LONDON.

Our core specialisms are represented in the breadth of the arts we engage in as part of the programme of exhibitions and events at our venues. This encompasses painting, sculpture, ceramic, photography, and performance as well as film, architecture, textiles and more. Together with our exhibitions and events, we offer international artist residencies, contemporary dance premiers, symposia, and workshops. Underpinning all of this is an appreciation and respect for nature to which most artists and individuals would readily identify, and a belief that innovation like creativity itself runs at the vanguard of our thoughts.