

Island

Island has the pleasure of announcing Piton diab, an Exhibition of new works by Brice Guilbert.

Brice Guilbert's work is an autobiographical portrait depicted with a wealth of different media, drawings, and music. Its nostalgia finds its genesis within his Creole roots. An exotic reminiscence of childhood and adolescence lived in Reunion Island.

A tension arises between his musical compositions - carried by very personal Creole lyrics and his painting, the latter being abstract and non-narrative as opposed to his musical texts. His paintings are composed of a succession of gestures, repeated such as a mantra in an accumulation of layers until a state of materiality and light is reached. To create this material quality, the artist produces his own tools, oil sticks, frames, as well as every step of his music. The issues between music and image, bouncing off one another, mirror each other. Such as an exorcism, Guilbert's work is tied to his personal and lived experiences.

Piton diab is discovered in two sequences. On the ground floor, a series of six large scale paintings. A colour wash forms going from red to yellow, suggesting a blaze lighting at the bottom of the painting from the floor up. This work studies the passage of one colour to another, through a density of material varying from smooth to rough depending on the application and accumulation of the oil stick. We find ourselves submerged in light, colour and fire, at the heart of Piton diab - that refers to the volcano next to which Brice Guilbert grew up. Through the skies of volcanic eruptions, he begins a search of the heat and the exotic, creating a trajectory to the south.

At the first floor, we discover a listening room where his last album Firinga is played on a turntable inherited from his father, recreating the Reunion home atmosphere. Firinga is the name of the cyclone which devastated the island in January 1989. The disc is a flashback upon the storm that brought down both the "case" of the artist, and tore apart his family. Through the re-appropriation of the traditional maloya style of Reunion Island, Guilbert carries his music into something folk and modern. His music is composed of atmospheric guitar and pure melodies, with a soft and intimate vocal performance.

A small landscape of an erupting volcano arises in the exhibition. It attempts to give life to something which seems dead, asleep since decades in order to obtain change, the birth of a new nature.

In the context of this exhibition Brice Guilbert desired to invite Francoise Vergès. She will give a talk on the subject of decolonisation on Thursday the 28th of September. Subject which was elaborated upon during documenta 14 in December 2015. The relationship of man to territory, Reunion Island (from where she also comes), the research of and the relationship to the south as well as the delocalisation of populations, the reparation and search for harmony are all subjects which bring both Vergès' and Guilbert's work together, aligning them to a common history and search for identity.