



**Antoine Langenieux-Villard**





## Antoine Langenieux-Villard

LOOM gallery, in collaboration with Fondazione Kenta is pleased to announce *La vespa e l'orchidea*, Antoine Langenieux-Villard's first solo exhibition with the gallery. The artist unveils a new body of work on canvas from the recent series *Abrasée*, stemming from his exploration of the materiality of painting and the intricate processes involved in its creation.

The exhibition is hosted in the fascinating context of Fabbrica Sasseti, the multi-story industrial loft, built in the 1930s as a wool yarn factory, that houses Fondazione Kenta. ALV's artistic practice delves deeply into the materiality of painting and the multifaceted processes involved in its creation. He approaches the painting surface not as a passive canvas but as a dynamic space for construction, rich with layers of meaning and conceptual depth.

This departure from conventional representational painting signals a more nuanced and exploratory approach. In his investigation, Antoine Langenieux-Villard (born in Paris, 1991) meticulously examines the gestures of painting, employing methods such as assemblage and folding to delve into the physical act of creation.

Through this process, he leaves behind tangible traces that serve as markers of his artistic journey. The artist presents a diverse array from the series *Abrasée*; artworks characterized by the recycling of materials and the manipulation of canvases off their stretchers. By substituting a paintbrush with sandpaper, he infuses his practice with an exper-

imental spirit, adding a tactile dimension to his work. Through deliberate material removal from both sides of the canvas, Langenieux-Villard crafts a complex network of lines that penetrate the surface, revealing the rich history of his artistic endeavors. This process of subtraction and subsequent reconstruction reflects themes of decay, repair, and memory, adding depth to his work.

Inspired by Japanese traditional techniques like *Boro*, the artist incorporates fabric bandages crafted from residues of past paintings, enhancing the visual and textural complexity of his artwork. This intricate layering not only rejuvenates the surface but also testifies to the enduring legacy of prior manipulations. By allowing his artworks to evolve over time, embracing the unpredictable effects of chance and the gradual decay of materials,

ALV infuses his practice with dynamism and vitality. This adaptive approach mirrors the fragmented nature of memory and the concealed layers of existence, inviting viewers to engage with the transient beauty of impermanence.

Antoine Langenieux-Villard was born in 1991 in Paris, lives and works between Paris and Brussels. In 2017 he graduated from Central Saint Martins - BA (Hons) Fine Art, London. He previously attended the Florence Academy of Art, Florence, Italy, the Ateliers de Sèvres, Art School Foundation, Paris and the Ecole Penninghen, Design & Architecture, Paris. He has exhibited his work widely in galleries, foundations and museums, earning critical acclaim for his distinctive style and thought-provoking concepts.

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### Exhibition:

9 May - 29 June  
Tue - Sat, 3 - 7pm



## *La vespa e l'orchidea*

Antoine Langenieux-Villard is neither an entomologist nor a botanist. He is a painter, and if he invites a wasp and an orchid to accompany his latest exhibition, it is in reference to the philosopher Gilles Deleuze, who in *Dialogues II* tells the strange story of a reproductive cycle dependent on the establishment of a lure.

The flower, indeed, becomes for a time a female-wasp by borrowing both its scent and its appearance. The male wasp, obliged to wait for his true mate to mature, entertains himself by rubbing his back and wings against the reproductive apparatus of this deceitful and comely hostess. After his visit, he flies away to gather nectar elsewhere, thus dispersing the precious pollen that will allow the orchid to reproduce.

The plant has employed cunning to beguile the unwitting insect, who does not immediately benefit from this adventure, other than that it gives it a way to pass the time before his other

half has become mature enough to reproduce in turn. The orchid and the wasp's life-rhythms and interests are different and deferred. But they are nevertheless inextricably bound together in the natural order, in which living beings make rather good use of otherness and asymmetry.

Antoine Langenieux-Villard, both in his collages and paintings, seeks to reenact this story. He is driven by the belief, formed after lengthy conversations with his elders - from Henri Matisse to Christian Bonnefoi, engaging with Degottex and Hantaï along the way - that painting can no longer build solely upon the image, the mere illusion of the surface.

What is hidden counts as much as what is shown and exposed, and it is in this interplay, where front and back sustain each other and develop while still retaining their autonomy and difference, that the wasp and the orchid slip in. Indeed, for the face of the artwork to be active, there must be another, partly invisible, story woven at the back; hidden depths that invigorate splashes of colour and make the

surface vibrate from below. For the ascent to occur, however, it is necessary to create openings, to pierce and tear the front. The artist achieves this by abrading a support he has previously prepared and stretched on a frame, before loosening it, laying it on the ground to colour it with light washes. Then he folds and crumples it randomly before letting it rest overnight, knowing that the painting is at work while he sleeps.

Unfolding the support is a moment of discovery in which happiness and disappointment mingle. He works at any given time with many other canvases, other colours, other folds. He repeats the process. The sheets pile up on the floor, forming a sort of carpet that the artist does not hesitate to tread upon. Then comes the moment of choosing, and it is then that Antoine Langenieux-Villard sands, rips off material, and weakens the paper or fine cotton he has chosen for its qualities of transparency and lightness. He mistreats the support but does not destroy it. On the contrary, he repairs it by reinforcing, on the back, the vulnerable points, the faults, and the cracks

resulting from the abrasion. To do this, he glues and sews fragments of coloured fabric, which to and fro in a hidden dance on the back of the canvas. Then he flattens the joints with an iron, or with a printing press for the paper collages.

By constraining and compressing the canvas, the artist seeks to regain a flat surface nourished, however, on its underside by the richness of the repairs. While they lean towards withdrawal rather than abundance, making colours sing in a rather restrained tone, with tempered oranges, graygreens, ochres, or slightly muted blues, sometimes even white or light gray, the works of Antoine Langenieux-Villard do not lack generosity.

In their texture, in the depth of their layering, they offer a constellation of possibilities revealing contiguous but non-homogeneous spaces, autonomous, independent, and yet intimately linked in such a way that at the end of a long and demanding journey, the tableau finally stands upright and firmly held between the four edges of the stretcher.





LOOM gallery opened in Milan in 2015 with a special focus on young and emerging artists such as Francesco De Prezzo, Benjamin Jones, Antoine Langenieux-Villard, Alexandra Barth.

Following the opening of its program and its collaboration with institutions and participation in art fairs, the gallery expanded its scope to work with mid-career and established artists solo shows, such as David Horvitz, Jonathan Monk, Ignacio Uriarte, Francisco Ugarte etc..

Since 2018 the gallery added historic artist estates to its roster, including those of Enrico Castellani, Jan Dibbets, Endre Tót, Willy de Sauter, Paul Gees, Annamaria Gelmi and Peter Downsbrough, focusing its research on Minimalism and Conceptual Art.

**Fondazione Kenta** is a non-profit foundation that opened its doors in 2019. Imagined by Marco and Giorgio Alverà as a catalyst for the exchange of ideas and a community space where diverse backgrounds converge. It takes its primary inspiration from Kenta Alverà, writer, art historian and pioneering women's rights activist across the 1900s.

The multi-story building that houses Fondazione Kenta was built in the 1930's for what was then a wool yarn factory, and is located in the heart of Milan's artisanal district known as Isola.























