

## KALTBLUT.



### Passion Painting: Thomas Levy-Lasne

real2real

Thomas Levy-Lasne is a major contemporary French painter, he's the soul of the scene. He has famously used his impeccable academic skills to produce pictures of white middle-class wild Parisian parties, erotic Chatroulette sessions, or screen-oriented portraits. His work embodies photo-naturalism to a degree that makes it tickle because it shows how we see the world constantly through the almighty lens. Maybe it's just me, but it seems like his works are almost a representation of the lens view than of the actual motif.



Until the 24th of October, his Parisian Galerie Les Filles du Calvaire presents a body of works grouped under the title L'asphyxie. Charcoals on one floor, oils on the other, Levy-Lasne jumps eyes first in the flora of the Anthropocene: winter gardens or industrial estates, artificial reproductions of a nature that we have never really seen. The paintings are melancholic and disenchanting, but carry a feeling of 'souvenir' pictures, as if Levy-Lasne was recording in painting what was about to disappear.

Thomas also answered my favourite thing to the question: what would you ask your painting idol. So read on, and check out the show in real or through the online viewing room available on the gallery's website.



**How do you start your day?**

I wake up usually at 12 am. I drink a coffee and take a lunch. At 2 pm I start working.

**If you were to paint one thing over and over what would it be?**

The nude is such a challenge that I think that I would choose this subject. It's very hard because the result must be obvious and animal. Everyone can judge it dazzlingly.



## **Do you like exhibiting your work?**

Yes of course. Paintings don't exist without viewers. I like to watch the dance of the viewers around my paintings, it could be disappointing but sometimes it's moving.

## **What do you do on the openings?**

I'm not as professional as I should, so normally at my opening, I'm simply exhausted. I have just finished painting. I didn't sleep well during two weeks of intense work. So I don't remember so much my openings. It's always bizarre to spend months alone and to be in front of so many people in three hours. I like it. It's a pleasure. Also because I have done my job and now it's up to the paintings.

## **What is your favourite place to think about a new painting?**

I find my paintings in the reality, so it's when I found a subject. Sometimes it could be a great emotion, a landscape, a posture of my lover, an animal. I started to travel to finding subjects, it's almost the same. I went to visit Tchernobyl for two days, for example, I took something like 7000 photos and in the end, there are two oil paintings and one charcoal.



## **What is your relation to past painters, and history of art?**

It's very important to me. I'm not against tradition. It's such a pleasure to find help through such numbers of masters. When I paint a tree, for example, I like to look at how Rubens, Rembrandt, Poussin, Wyeth, Fragonard etc made it. It's enriching the experience of the tree. It also makes me humble but it's such a pleasure to make the game of painting!

## **Which question would you like to ask your painting Idol?**

How much stuff he had to sacrifice?



**How did you develop this work you're doing now?**

I'm very spoiled by the question of climate change. It's such a monstrous problem. Since three years, I tried to insert this vertigo into my painting. Like an oxymoron: I paint with a lot of love and care the world of the appearance, in all its wealth, but this world is becoming a danger because mankind is looking elsewhere.

**How did you meet your favourite collector?**

I'm not sure I have a favourite collector. I like collectors who seem to understand what I do. Could share good laughs and at the end share the same melancholy that you could find in my work. I like it when they follow my risk too. I have a collector who has a portrait of a woman in a hospital in front of his dining table.





## Why do we still paint in 2020?

I think it's because we trust the image. There is 100 million publication by day but how many are important? There are the media but which images will stay? An image could be very powerful to found a culture. The art critic Alain Berland speaks about the patient picture about painting. I think it's close to that. The picture with density, unconsciousness, body, love and caring. A counterpoint to all the other image: thicker, more intelligent, more alive, more lasting. It's making sense also that so many people around the world want to paint in a civilization of virtuality and technology. For me, it's a marvellous medium to get deep into the materiality of the world, to live in the world.



## Where is Painting heading?

Everywhere around the world. New-York, London, Berlin of course. More discreet, it seems to me that the French painting is very rich and powerful even without me! I organised a conference at the Villa Medici in Rome to show 120 painters in two hours.



I'm very pleased that with the end of modern art, painters take more care about the quality of the fabric of their painting. The pictorial matter has far more quality in general now that in the '50s.

I think it's such a great period for paintings, the painters know it, the institutions and the public not yet.

## Can you tell me 3 colleagues whose work you admire?

In France : Mireille Blanc, Damien Cadio, Mathieu Cherkit

Elsewhere: John Currin, Dana Schutz, Jonathan Wateridge. But there are so many!

Thank you Thomas, and thank you, reader.

All images belong to the Artist.

