

REVIVAL I - XVIIIe siècle

Exhibition co-curated by Laura Gowen and Rachel Cole

Sara Anstis, Aglaé Bassens, Carine Bovey, Milano Chow, Ryan Driscoll, Genieve Figgis, Gonzalo Fuenmayor, Louise Giovanelli, Brice Guilbert, Asif Hoque, Ewa Juskiewicz, Sanam Khatibi, Giuliano Macca, Quentin James McCaffrey, Sébastien Mettraux, Emily Marie Miller Coan, Jesse Mockrin, Nicolas Party, Robert Russell, Gretchen Scherer, Jake Wood-Evans, Sofia Yeganeh, Flora Yukhnovich

19 January - 29 April, 2023



Jesse Mockrin, *Weep into my eyes*, 2019, oil on cotton, 132.1 x 91.4 cm (each), 132.1 x 182.9 cm (total)
The artwork is a loan from Mr. Rahul M. Sabhnani. Courtesy of Rachel Cole Art Advisory and Gowen, Geneva.
Image: © the Artist, courtesy Night Gallery, Los Angeles and James Cohan, New York

Gowen presents *REVIVAL I - XVIIIe siècle*, the first exhibition in a series which unites over twenty international contemporary artists whose visual language engages with, reimagines, and transforms imagery from the art historical canon. Co-curated by Laura Gowen and New York-based advisor Rachel Cole Sherr, the show explores various stylistic and methodological interventions in relation to eighteenth-century aesthetic traditions. Elegant portraiture, conversation pieces, landscapes and the defining mores, trends and events of the era are revisited via ever-changing modes of representation. *REVIVAL I - XVIIIe siècle* aspires to capture the eighteenth-century zeitgeist, connecting the past to contemporary work as a mechanism for understanding and informing about the complexities of the present, whilst laying the groundwork for the future.

The *Revival* exhibitions propose an inquiry into the encounter between art history and the compositional modes of the hyper-present. *Revival* is a provocation. It summons its audience to contemplate the interplay between history, memory and living expression; between the past and the present; and between various, dynamic modes of genre, composition and performance. Changes in modes of representation have often been linked to political, economic and socio-cultural conditions, or to historical events and catastrophes, creating the demand for collective memory through visual production. The reemergence and appropriation of the past in art historical movements necessarily reflects shifts in power, perspective and ideology. Those shifts become the focal point of the exhibition series. *Revival* contends that the revisiting of art history in contemporary compositions extends opportunities for pertinent examinations of the present.



Carine Bovey, *Stagnum vitae*, 2022, oil on canvas, 95 cm Ø, 37.4 in Ø. Courtesy of Gowen, Geneva. © the Artist and Gowen

Through various stylistic and methodological interventions, the contemporary artists included in the inaugural exhibition *REVIVAL I - XVIIIe siècle* embrace eighteenth-century references to conceive new aesthetic vernaculars. The show emerges against the backdrop of an époque that bore witness to the scientific, intellectual and art historical transformations initiated by the Age of Enlightenment. A century of power and of revolution, it was a time of radical breaks with tradition. Equally, it was the century of colonialism, via imperialism, and thus the rise of the potent notions of 'possession' and 'power' across nations and of individuals. These fomenting political forces merged concurrently with developments in aesthetic traditions: Art History and Archeology were established as disciplines, ancient histories were unearthed and excavated, and the growing bourgeoisie and merchant classes became consumed by an interest in tourism and the "Grand Tour".

The works in *REVIVAL I - XVIIIe siècle* reveal certain parallels between contemporary artists and the art of the past. The eighteenth-century tradition of elegant portraiture is reflected in the contemporary interpretations of Ewa Juszkiewicz, Jesse Mockrin, Jake Wood-Evans and Giuliano Macca. Trends in tourism and commerce, and subsequent increased foreign trade as well as the production of porcelain and differentiating style are explored in the work of Asif Hoque and Robert Russell. Over the course of the century, the decorative style of Rococo — referenced in the work of Flora Yukhnovich, Sofia Yeganeh, Jesse Mockrin, Carine Bovey and Sara Anstis — was addressed by the Greco-Roman revival via Neoclassicism, now reinterpreted in the work of Asif Hoque and Ryan Driscoll. Conversation portraits and genre scenes are handled by Genieve Figgis and Emily Marie Miller Coan while Louise Giovanelli and Jesse Mockrin depict the era's decadent fabrics and textures. The increasingly popular landscape tradition defined during the eighteenth century and differentiated into several categories, is represented in contemporary compositions: the picturesque landscape, here shown in the work of Sanam Khatibi, Nicolas Party and Sébastien Mettraux; and the sublime landscape, revisited in the volcanoes of Brice Guilbert and Ryan Driscoll. Finally, the decadent baroque or rigid, neoclassical interiors and exteriors take form in the work of Gretchen Scherer, Quentin James McCaffrey, Milano Chow, Gonzalo Fuenmayor and Aglaé Bassens.

By presenting diverse works in direct conversation, *REVIVAL I - XVIIIe siècle* seeks to capture the spirit of an era, as a means of educating and informing its audience, elucidating the intricacies of the period, while simultaneously challenging their perceptions of the present. The exhibition is further elaborated by a parallel revival: the selected artists draw upon the era's themes in the same way that eighteenth-century artists reverted to references borrowed from classical antiquity. In both cases, the harnessing of the past to contemporary work serves as a mechanism for understanding, and acceptance of the complexities of the present, simultaneously laying the groundwork for the future.



Robert Russell,
Teacup #29, 2021
Oil on canvas
177.8 x 177.8 cm.
70 x 70 in

Courtesy of Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, and Gowen, Geneva
Image: © the Artist, Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, NY and Anat Ebgi, Los Angeles, CA.



Genieve Figgis
Music in the park, 2018
Acrylic on canvas
120 x 100 x 2 cm
47.2 x 39.4 x .8 in

This artwork is a loan from Mr. Rahul M. Sabhnani.
Courtesy of Rachel Cole Art Advisory and Gowen, Geneva.
Image: © the Artist



Giuliano Macca, *Escape*, 2022, oil on canvas, 185 x 140 cm, 72.8 x 55.1 in. Courtesy of Gowen, Geneva. © the Artist and Gowen



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