

GOWEN
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

LES
ENFANTS
DU PARADIS

By
Jérôme
Zonder

Show Presentation |

May 8 - July 5 | 2025

A black and white collage titled "FOTOMONTAJE" (Photo Montage). The collage is composed of several rectangular and irregular cutouts pasted onto a dark, textured background. The elements include: a large, detailed drawing of three faces with exaggerated, grotesque features at the top; a cartoon character with a large eye and a speech bubble; a large, stylized eye with a long, pointed tongue; a person in a suit and bow tie; a car with several people inside; a large, stylized letter 'A' on the right; and various other abstract and figurative images. The overall style is surreal and expressive.

[illegible]

The variations in the scale of his works generate spatial circulation games: the viewer wanders spatially and mentally amongst the enigmata of an extremely vivid polygraphic system through which Zonder provokes the viewer to question the line between the commonplace and violent, raw, unsettling images. Drawing from current or archive imagery, the history of art and with an eye for popular culture, Zonder places adjacent references to Albrecht Dürer, Robert Crumb, Rembrandt, Hieronymus Bosch, Charles Burns, Otto Dix, Walt Disney, pornography or the world of literature, composing narratives with eclectic, sometimes cruel themes. Portraits of adults, celebrities, characters from cinema and comics or self portraits mingle with those of children and teenagers, gradually filled with questioning, trauma, doubt, or pain, making often uneasy viewing.

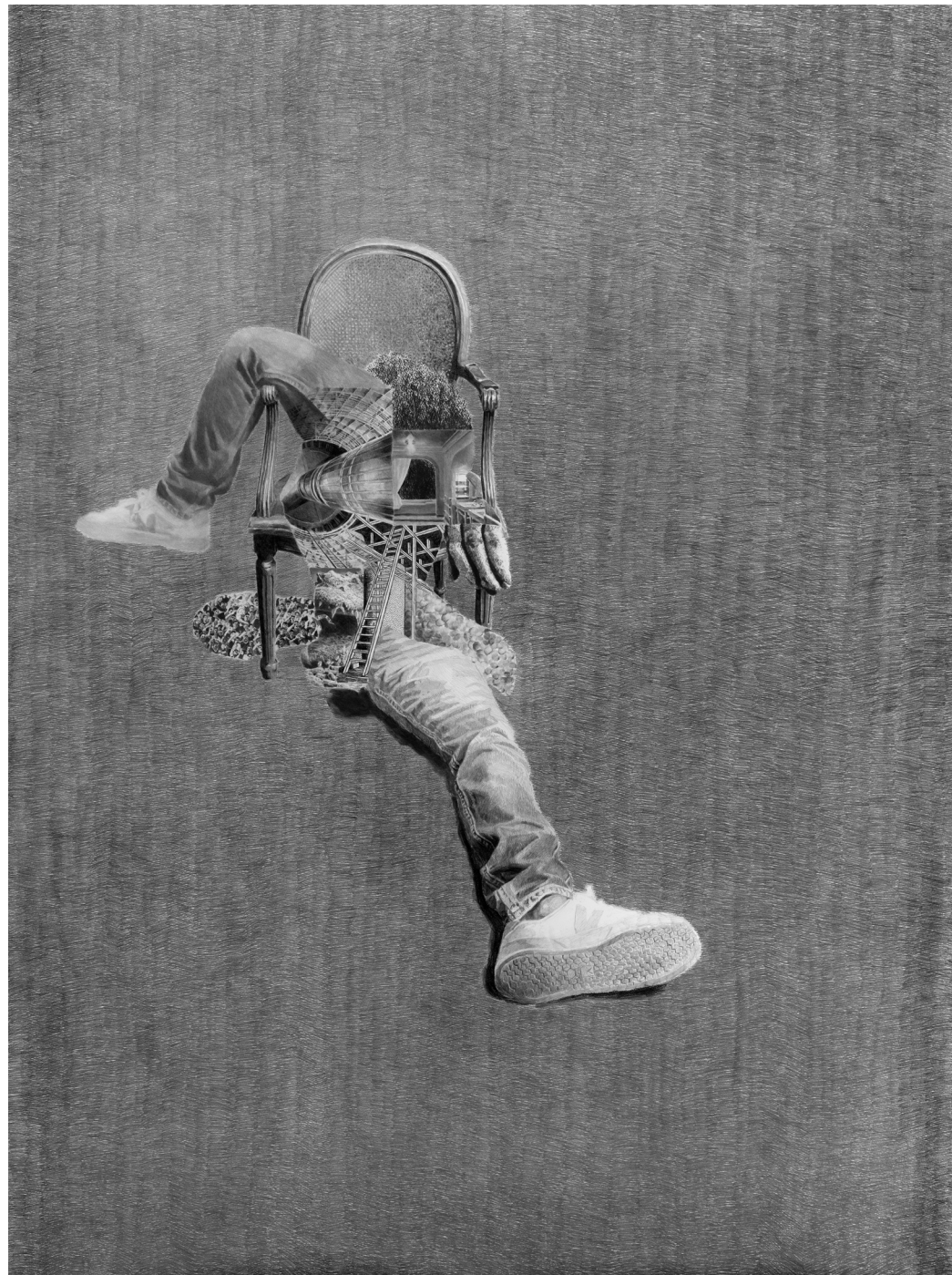
In the words of Zonder "Narration pulls us into the drawing, and only the body keeps us on the surface. Drawing, for me, is existing constantly between distance and proximity, figuration and abstraction, attraction and repulsion."

The exhibition takes its name from Marcel Carné's film "Les Enfants du Paradis" (Children of Paradise, 1945) and in naming the child characters used in his own drawings, Zonder adopts the same names from the film. The viewer frequently meets Garance, Baptiste, and Pierre-François, protagonists who reoccur over the years throughout his work. Just like in the film, constantly shifting between fiction and reality, his characters move within a theatrical world. They become a metaphor for our century and for life, where everyone plays a role - sometimes without even realising it.

Dark, powerful, and with an overwhelming visual intensity, Zonder's drawings push the boundaries of his craft, executed with extraordinary technical prowess, experimentation, particularly with scale and focal length, and question our relationship to violence and the wider world we inhabit.

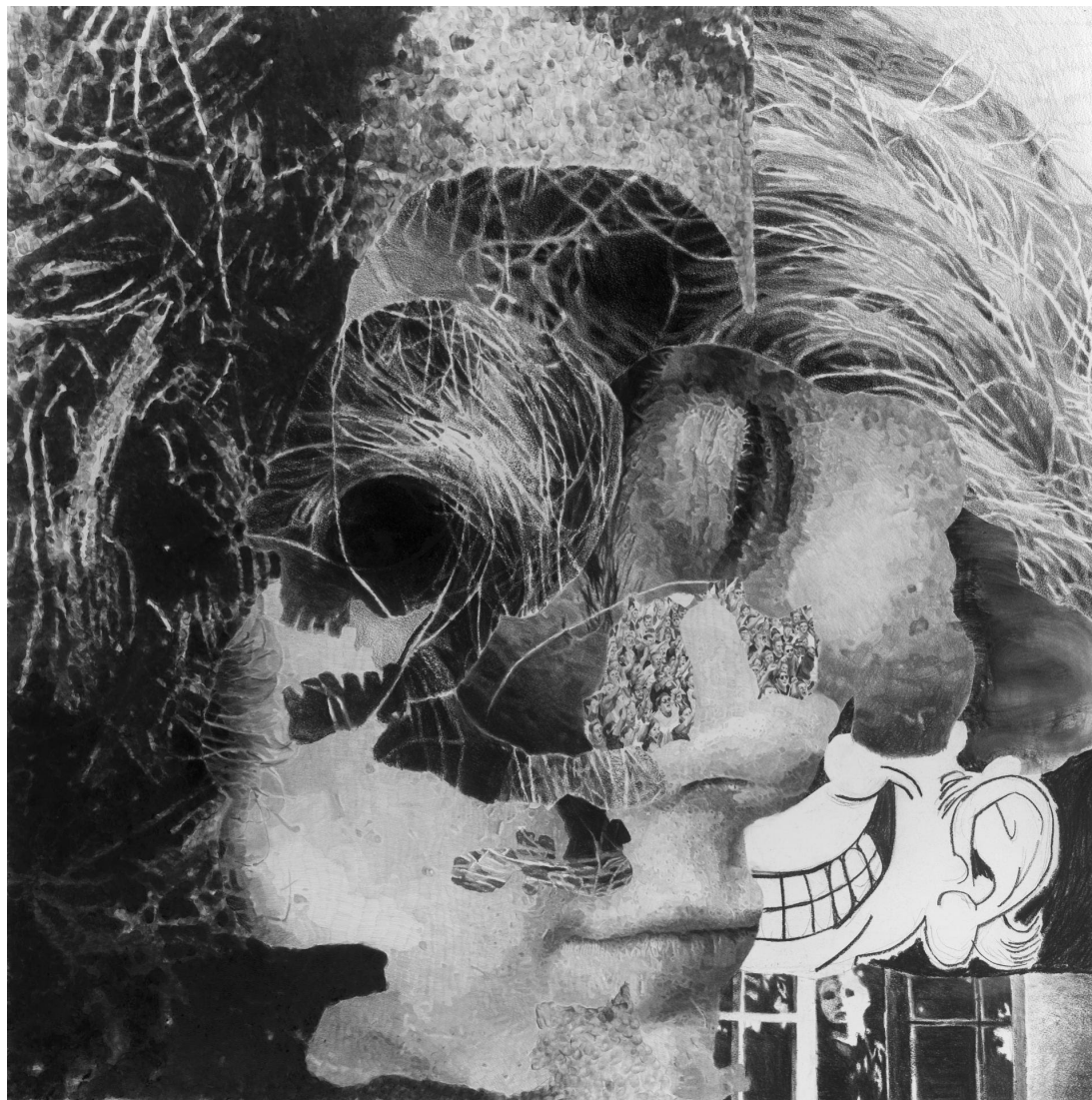
His work is receiving increasing attention on the international art scene and is included in major collections in Europe. Having participated in the gallery's group exhibition at Art Genève this year, the current show marks Zonder's first solo collaboration with GOWEN. He is also represented by Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris.

Étude pour un portrait de Pierre-François #44, 2023
charcoal and graphite on paper
200 x 150 cm
78.7 x 59.1 in
Framed: 214.5 x 164.5 x 5 cm
JZ 04





Installation View. *Les enfants du paradis*, GOWEN, Geneva, CH. © Julien Gremaud



Étude pour un portrait de Pierre-François #24, 2021

charcoal and graphite on paper

150 x 150 cm

59.1 x 59.1 in

Framed: 161 x 161 x 5 cm

JZ 01



Installation View. *Les enfants du paradis*, GOWEN, Geneva, CH. © Julien Gremaud



Étude pour un portrait de Pierre-François #90, 2023

Graphite and charcoal on paper

150 x 150 cm

59.1 x 59.1 in

Framed: 161.6 x 161.6 x 4.7 cm

JZ 85

Étude pour un portrait de Pierre-François #50, 2023
charcoal and graphite on paper
110 x 75 cm
43.3 x 29.5 in
JZ 06





Installation View. *Les enfants du paradis*, GOWEN, Geneva, CH. © Julien Gremaud



Étude pour un portrait de Pierre-François #109, 2025
Graphite and charcoal on paper
90 x 60 cm
35.4 x 23.6 in
JZ 89



Installation View. *Les enfants du paradis*, GOWEN, Geneva, CH. © Julien Gremaud

Portrait de Main #5, 2019
Graphite and charcoal on paper
200 x 150 cm
78.7 x 59.1 in
Framed : 206 x 156 cm
JZ 36





Étude pour un portrait de Pierre-François #46, 2023
charcoal and graphite on paper
150 x 200 cm
59.1 x 78.7 in
JZ 05



Installation View. *Les enfants du paradis*, GOWEN, Geneva, CH. © Julien Gremaud



Étude pour un portrait de Pierre-François #64, 2023
charcoal and graphite on paper
75 x 110 cm
29.5 x 43.3 in
JZ 08



Installation View. *Les enfants du paradis*, GOWEN, Geneva, CH. © Julien Gremaud



Étude pour un portrait de Pierre-François #50, 2023
charcoal and graphite on paper
200 x 150 cm
78.7 x 59.1 in
Framed: 214.5 x 164.5 cm
JZ 07

Born in Paris in 1974, **Jérôme Zonder** lives and works in Paris. He is a graduate of the Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, in 2001. Solo exhibitions include: *Au Village* at Lieu unique (Nantes, France, 2014), *Fatum* at the Maison Rouge - Fondation Antoine de Galbert (Paris, France, 2015), *The Dancing Room* at the Tinguely Museum (Basel, Switzerland, 2017), *Devenir traces* gathering more than 130 works in the historical spaces at the Chateau de Chambord (Chambord, France, 2018) and *Jérôme Zonder, Portraits* at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris (France, 2019), Casino Luxembourg (Luxembourg, 2023), Museum of Jewish Art and History in 2024 (Paris, France). Group exhibitions include: *Le Massacre des Innocents : Poussin, Picasso, Bacon* at the Musée Condé curated by Laurent Le Bon and Pierre Rosenberg (2017, Chantilly, France), *Guernica* at the Musée Picasso Paris (Paris, France, 2018), *Quel amour!?* at the Musée d'Art Contemporain de Marseille (France, 2018) and at the Berardo Museum (Lisbon, Portugal, 2019), *Déflagrations - Dessins d'enfants et violences de masse* at the MUCEM (Marseille, France, 2021), *La Beauté du Diable* at the FRAC Franche-Comté (Besançon, France, 2022), the MO.CO. in Montpellier (France, 2023), and *Désordres - Extraits de la collection Antoine de Galbert*, Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, France, *La peinture est-elle une arme ?*, La fabrique des Arts, Carcassonne, France, *Inspiré.e.s - Acte 4 - Dessin Contemporain*, Centre d'art contemporain l'arTsenal, Dreux, France (2024). Collections include: the Istanbul Modern Museum (Istanbul, Turkey), the Musée Jenisch Vevey (Switzerland), the Musée des beaux-arts du Locle (Le Locle, Switzerland), the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Neuchâtel (Neuchâtel, Switzerland), the Fonds Municipal d'Art Contemporain (Paris, France), the Abattoirs, Musée - FRAC Occitanie (Toulouse, France), FRAC Picardie (Amiens, France), FRAC Auvergne (Clermont-Ferrand, France), Musée des Beaux-Art (Paris, France), Musée National de l'histoire de l'immigration (Paris, France), Collection Antoine de Galbert (Paris, France), Fondation Emerige, Collection Laurent Dumas (Paris, France), and Collection Florence et Daniel Guerlain (Paris, France).





Contact: T. +41(0)79 330 17 54 | info@gowencontemporary.com
Grand-Rue 23, 1204 Geneva