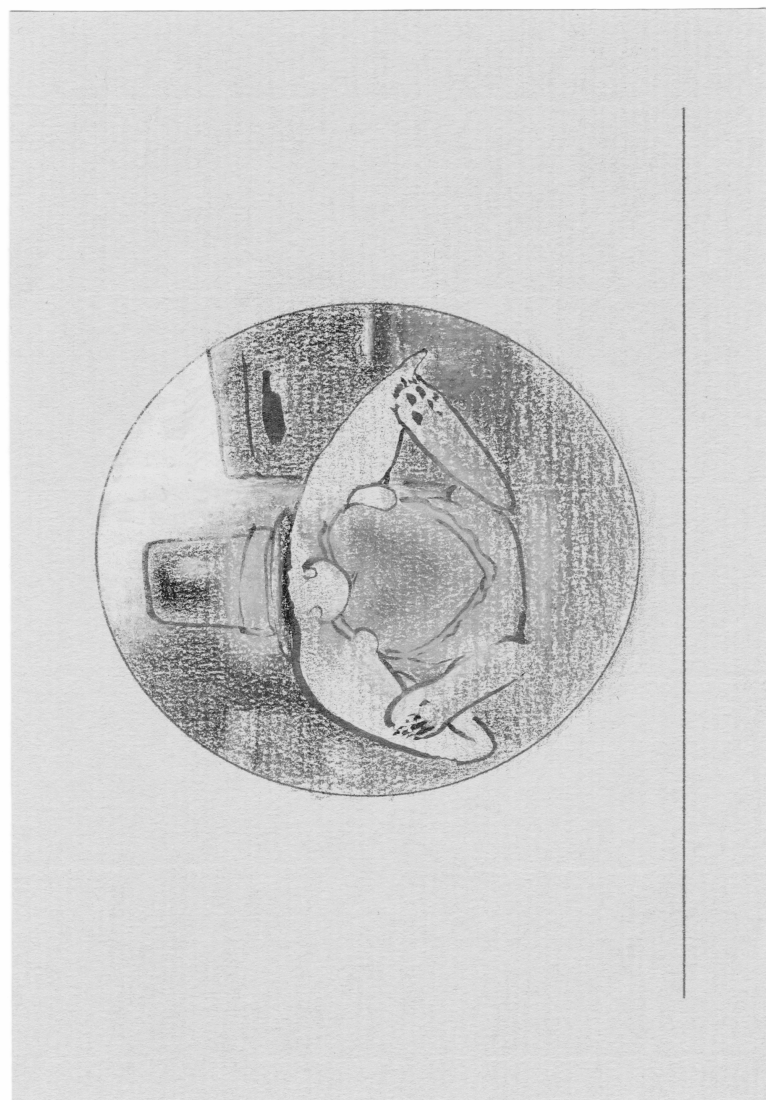


Arto Vanhasselt Goldsmiths MFA Degree Show 2025



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Through the mud of the often mortifying underground, lie burrows. Their holes, walls and tunnels intertwine into surface architectures whose vanishing points collapse into black cavities within which the future disappears – we must understand that the future is not impossible, but a choice has been made to keep it unknown. Lines stretch their folds and furls, casting doubts and disappointing our desire for transparent discernment. Despite the paucity of identifiable information, these are additive paintings, paintings that accumulate misty layers and, by layering, bury the hope of a signifier being “at hand”. Spotted here and there by their marble’s eyeballs, rabbits occupy the pictures posted at the entrance or perk up out of their homes, running along the galleries or dissipated in an explosive camouflage. Only seeing at 40 degrees, it is vital for the rabbits to always stay alert and on the move. In the video *Rabbit & Ferret*, the rabbit followed by the ferret passes back and forth in a burlesque cruelty of ambiguous predation. Far from being a symbolic object, the rabbit functions in the exhibition as a lure: going about their businesses, *they give us to paint*. They are the motif of an energy and a desire.

We can see Arto’s practice organising itself into constellations of flows in which golden magma spills light up like the promise of an infinite energy. There are tangible infrastructures that refer to virtual networks of organisations; once exposed, they become self-evident and self-defeating. The burrows stretch out from one side to the other, always sneaking in somewhere else, when they don’t lead us to mysteries like anti-predictive screens, their identification by those who track them down will only ever remain partial, asymmetrical, and paranoid. Depictions of burrows are very likely to be missed. It is the incompleteness of their representations that allows us to perceive a resistant form of beauty, renewing the energies necessary not for a future, but for a pursuit.

Meanwhile, an absurdly disproportionate cog fuels a dawdling tail while offering a generous understanding of its mechanism. Its first industrial revolution aesthetic is reminiscent of a pivotal moment in the division of energies into either productive forces or “dilettante” attitudes. If this separation is to be lamented, and we’d prefer it to be as intricate as a burrow, a certain nostalgia can nonetheless be felt in the face of today’s immaterial “cloud” capitalism. Adversely palpable, Arto’s gearings are conceived as a headlong rush that draws on a mode of circularity in which energies are happily emptied out: the burrows are roamed and run through, worn out; the rabbit, the ferret, Arto, me, you, we, exhaust ourselves. But it comes back again: we roll, we spin, we spend, in infinite expenditure.

Heloise Chassepot