

# JUSTIN WEILER

GALERIE PARIS-BEIJING

## OPERIRE #5

Couvrir, recouvrir, cacher, dissimuler

30.01.20 — 15.03.20

Opening on Thursday, January 30th 2020

*Galerie Paris-Beijing is pleased to announce that it now represents the artist Justin Weiler. His first solo exhibition will be presented in January 2020 : Operire #5 - Couvrir, recouvrir, dissimuler, cacher.*

*Justin Weiler, the spectacle of modern life*  
— by Marion Zilio

Justin Weiler's work finds its place within the tension of the borderline between interior and exterior space, between contemplation and domestication, between utopia and dystopia. The surfaces weave a motif that becomes a pattern. Awnings, greenhouses, screens, iron store shutters, plants and bouquets of flowers obey a stratified frontality, like metaphors rendered in the layers of ink swept repetitively across the surface of the piece.

For his first solo exhibition at Galerie Paris-Beijing, Justin Weiler invites us to wander through the inside of an exhibition greenhouse composed of interlocking systems. The gallery becomes the den behind every threshold, a space for meandering within the interstices around an arrangement of opaque windows, monolithic black extruded walls and a backlit glasshouse. Weiler further develops a protocol that he himself has fixed: *Operire#5* pursues his tireless gesture of covering. He covers, re-covers, conceals, hides, and consequently reveals through masking. When the gesture becomes persistent and obstinate, or passes meticulously or nervously over the preceding layer, he enhances it while simultaneously removing a thin deposit.



© Justin Weiler, *Bouquet pour Annie*, 2018.



© Justin Weiler, *Operire #3*, 2017.

*Operire* was born in the depths of a bunker. Confronted with the feeling of oppression under the density and brutality of cement, Weiler responds to this frontality through contrast. The “iron curtain” – an expression made popular by Churchill – has become a pretext for Weiler to create a play between material and light, whose effects on the façades dilate in the retinal blackness. The surface seems pierced by a halo of light, which gives these oppressive striations an intense vibration. The coldness of the metal and its iterative resonances open the space little by little, liberating the grate from a unilateral reading.

In the series *Screen*, the artist substitutes glass plates with Arches paper. Here, the material base participates in the *mise en scène*, inviting the walls of the gallery to reveal reserves of white like a photogram or a photographic negative. The motif dilates and each passage of black or Meudon white materializes a thickness that extends outwards in a play of transparency and opacity.



© Justin Weiler, *Screen series*, 2017-2019 (detail).

It is again this desire to extend – both plastic and temporal – that is at work in the monumental *Bouquet pour Annie*. Realized over nearly three years, the drawing is presented in the form of a grid composed of 81 frames behind which a bouquet of flowers grows and withers. A contemporary vanity, the work creates a sort of alter that unfolds the image and saturates the space in a formal game between the line and the organic. The tropical plants and grasses, standardized in our living rooms by Ikea, also take their place behind a frame of vitrines, like animals enclosed in their cage. Greenhouses are incubators that host microcosms, but they are also the prerogative of colonizers who exhibit the fruits of their conquest, as was the Crystal Palace of Retiro during the exhibition on the Philippines in 1887. Conceived by the architect Ricardo Velásquez Bosco, the Palace presented the “exoticism” of everyday life in the Spanish colonies, while the Retiro garden reconstructed an indigenous village. In residence at the Casa Velásquez, Weiler created *Madrid*, a prison-like composition displaying aloe vera plants.



© Justin Weiler, *Ad Retro*, 2017.

At the back of the gallery, the greenhouse *Ad Retro*, covered in a frenetic and liberating gesture with Meudon white, consequently appears as if it is an attempt at atonement. Generally used to obscure windows or as a maintenance product, the paste creates a covering that makes invisible that which is ordinarily exhibited. The backlit architecture inverts the contrasts: the black comes out of the white, and we contemplate its obscurity.

The vitrine, with its play of reflections that integrate us within the object of desire, materializes a median space, the lightness and transparency of which are finally transformed into an opaque barrier in the *Mapp* sculptures, made from adhesive mortar for plaster panels. Facing the precision of the gesture that we find in his vanities, mysterious monoliths rise up, which are perhaps meant to influence the evolution of the human species. More melancholic than moralizing, more poetic than political, Weiler's monochromatic work suspends the passing of time. Beyond the grid is the assertion of a depth that opens space and renders visible that which was hidden.



© Justin Weiler, *série Mapp*, 2019. Courtesy Galerie Paris-Beijing

*Justin Weiler was born in Paris in 1990. He studied at ESBA (Nantes) and ENSBA (Paris). He currently lives between Nantes and Paris. In 2016, he is laureate of the Visual Arts Prize of the City of Nantes and the same year, the Biennale of Contemporary Arts of CRAC Champigny-sur-Marne. In 2018, he graduated with honors from Paris Academy of Fine Arts for the Pierre David-Weill Prize. He currently has a residency at the Casa Velásquez in Madrid (winner 2019, painting section).*