

**Press release**

**Vincent Gicquel | *En Vie***

7 December, 2019 – 18 January 2020

Opening: Saturday, 7 December 2019, 6–9pm

carlier | gebauer is pleased to announce *En Vie*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by French artist Vincent Gicquel. This will be his second exhibition with the gallery.

Man is, among other things, himself an animal. The characters that populate Vincent Gicquel's canvases are a strange bunch that one would at first struggle to describe as human. The exaggerated postures of these strange, hairless figures resemble man, but lack any of the signifiers that might position them socially or connect them to life as we know it. Instead, naked and propelled purely by impulse, they occupy a universe completely their own: a liminal, dystopic kind of Eden. They are border creatures who exist outside of politics and humanity, dwelling on the horizon line, walls, a precipice.

In his book *The Inner Touch: Archeology of Sensation*, Daniel Heller-Roazen writes that what separates man from other living beings also separates him from himself—"every man carries a 'nonman' within him." Yet, as Heller-Roazan notes, this operation of separating man from animal "invariably produces a remainder, which cannot be attributed with any exclusivity to either human or inhuman beings." The narrative world that Vincent Gicquel creates in *En Vie* is animated precisely by this remaining element, by "a region common, by definition, to all animal life." Therefore, by exploring the furthest reaches of what it means to be human, Gicquel somehow arrives at its core. Yet contrary to the sober violence of many painters who share his resolute dedication to depicting the human condition, Gicquel creates a lyrical and fantastical world of perversity and suspense. His characters operate within this universe as forces of pure vitality that are completely unfettered by notions morality or decorum, they simply exist. They are immodest, seek pleasure, and occupy a seemingly childish universe. They look at us brashly. We look at them. Yet, strangely, they never look at each other. Despite this, they share a common pact: to live, purely and simply, in thrall to their respective needs and predilections. A pure force pulses through them, driving them to follow their impulses and not to die slowly, suffocated by unfulfilled desires.

**Vincent Gicquel** (b.1974 in Normandy) lives and works in Bordeaux. He has recently exhibited at La Criée centre d'art contemporain, Rennes and the presentation of the Pinault collection at Couvent des Jacobins, Rennes.