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HEURES D'OUVERTURE  
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## Jean-Luc Blanc *L'œil de la Dorade*

4 December 2020 - 27 February 2021

Opening Friday the 4th of December from 11am to 8 pm.

On a window ledge in his studio, the hand of a zombie clutches onto flowers. This suits him, he who voluntarily borrows details from B movies and imprints them into his memory when he narrates them to me. Like that of the house in the inland regions of Nice where several televisions are stacked on top of one another. Every Sunday night, he turns them on to watch the same film. I imagine the walls of a mountain chalet, the branches of the trees tapping the windows, somber corridors with old carpet, the flickering of the blue light of an old television set, a young boy in pyjamas, his eyes closed, his two hands pressed against the screen. The village is not built on a cemetery, but the dead need a good enough reason to take revenge. In 1926 they hurtled down the hill to destroy the village.

He starts by cutting out photos from magazines. He classifies them and piles them up against a mirror. Then he chooses some which he assembles in laminated folders, a big bath of liquid where images bleed onto each other. Later he quickly paints them, with just enough shortcuts for the image to become concrete. A bride who is taken from a Daniel Schmidt film, a couple of men whose outrageous makeup and silver neck ruffs could make them the heroes from Mario Bava's *Planet of the Vampires*, Marianne Faithfull's face, whilst it could still be that of many others.

He hangs them in his studio much like in an exhibition. Like the poster of a face that a teenager would hang up without knowing anything about the person. Like putting a lamp in a room imagining it's filled with positive energy to take in. To keep oneself company. To manifest one's desire to change. They remind me of the pleasure one feels when leaving the cinema, whilst we renegotiate the memory we made of a film. They make material life acceptable by helping to think of the present as a bygone era; and nostalgia blends naturally with one's perception of immediate things.

Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *Colonel Blimp*, tells itself and certainly better than me the idea I have of the emotional intelligence of Jean-Luc Blanc's paintings.

In 1902, two officers, one German (Anton Walbrook), and the other British (Roger Livesey), get into a battle in a glass gymnasium for the honor of their nation whilst outside, in the snow, Edith (Deborah Kerr) a woman that they met a few hours earlier, is waiting for them. The two men end up leaving safe and sound and spend a few days with her during which they form asymmetrical affections for her which will link them for the rest of their lives. Just before saying goodbye, Edith accepts to marry Walbrook. She would have preferred the affection of the colonel, but he only shows her a frank and military camaraderie. Only once back in England and alone does he realise that the memory of this meeting, as brief as it was, would never leave him. And so the regret of not having been able to see soon enough that he loved her becomes inseparable from his memory of Edith.

Twenty years go by before the two men meet again in England, in a prison camp where Anton Walbrook is retained after the defeat of the Germans. When he returns to England to escape Hitler in 1935, Edith is dead. Barbara, the colonel's wife, is also dead. The two men have aged. The colonel admits then to his friend what he would never have been able to guess on his own. That he has never forgotten Edith's face and her first apparition in her Marie Stuart costume, her brown collar, her red hair tied in a bun, her mouth hardened by her lipstick. That all his life, he devoted it to recovering the memory of her face in the women he met. He takes him into the living room where the portrait of Barbara overlooks the fireplace, lost in the middle of some hunting trophies. Walbrook then discovers what we already know. She is entirely similar to Edith since she is also personified by Deborah Kerr. Walbrook points out to the colonel that he saw Edith grow old when he married a woman twenty years his junior to keep the image intact, unaltered, of the young girl who had kissed him before leaving the military hospital. The two men are separated and Blimp offers his friend the services of his chauffeur. The car moves in the dark. Walbrook and the young officer speak without being able to observe each other. When she finally turns towards him, the red glow of the traffic light at which they stop makes appear in backlighting, and for the third time, the red and juvenile face of Deborah Kerr. He thinks it's a mirage and asks her name. "Angela." "That's a lovely name. It comes from angel, doesn't it?" "Yes. But I think it stinks. My friends call me Johnny."

Text by Baptiste Pinteaux.