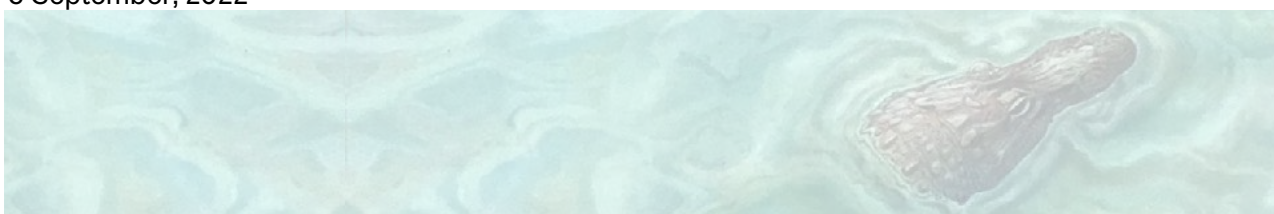


# BEAU À LA LOUCHE

JOÃO VILHENA

3 September, 2022



47 rue de Montmorency - 75003 Paris

15 October 2022

**Vernissage : Saturday 3 September, from 4pm**

Opening hours : Tue-Sat 11am - 7pm

Alberta Pane Gallery is pleased to present João Vilhena's third solo exhibition in the Parisian venue.

João Vilhena finds most of his subjects by collecting old photos, stereoscopies, and postcards, so that these play a central role in his work. Postcards and holiday snapshots are therefore bearers of memories, of a saudade, and evoke both the distance and the attachment to a place of belonging. A stereoscopic view\* is for him, above all, a scopic impulse. Over the years, these photo-objects have become for the artist a whole field for a graphic journey.

João Vilhena's work is also guided by his interest in the role of the viewer, indeed, according to the artist, the gaze is what creates and gives a meaning to the artwork. The artist's drawings, executed with extreme precision and accuracy, engage with the viewer, proposing both visual puns, such as trompe-l'oeil and anamorphosis, and word games, such as spoonerisms and anagrams, thus creating a close link between images and words.

Moreover, João Vilhena's present a strong erotic charge that can be defined as the impulse that generates the desire to look. According to the words of the artist: "Whoever produces an erotic image touches, immanently, the issue of representation". In the context of this research, libido, the scopic and death drive, sacrifice and other taboos have inspired his work for several years, including the exhibition *Erotheism, Sacred Drawing* presented in 2015 at Alberta Pane Gallery.

On the occasion of his new exhibition, *Beau à Louche*, João Vilhena's drawings enter into a fictional dialogue with the imaginary field that stems from the theme of water. The exhibition is inspired by the absurd thought exercise of Sir Walter Raleigh, who claimed to be able to calculate the weight of smoke by subtracting the weight of the ashes from the weight of the cigar. In the wake of Sir Walter Raleigh thinking, João Vilhena argues that if up to 60 percent of the human body is composed of water and this is renewed by an average of 2.4 liters per day, how much desire is contained in this liquid when we talk about having mouth-watering (L'eau à la bouche)?

It was in exploring this theme that João Vilhena found an inspiration in photos taken during summer vacations, spent at seaside resorts. These images, with sweeping sea views, conceal in themselves moments of carefree serenity. Happy vacationers expose their uninhibited bodies and sometimes dare some acrobatics. Praise of laziness and freedom, these images inspire sensuality and voluptuousness. Some of them get carried away and do not hesitate to kiss in front of the camera. Others seem to be waiting only for that...

In this exhibition, the artist invites us to immerse in an atmosphere at once nostalgic and erotic. Therefore, the artist's love for enigmas is mixed with written and visual language, ultimately configuring itself as a "cartography of desire".

\* A stereoscopic view is an image-making technique which convey an illusion of three-dimensionality, similar to that generated by the binocular vision of the human visual system.

## João Vilhena

---

Born in 1973 in Beja, Portugal  
Lives and works in Paris, France

João Vilhena graduated from Villa Arson, in France. He won the Rothschild Painting Prize in 2003 and has exhibited his work in numerous private and public institutions in France, Italy, and abroad (Spain, Portugal, Poland, Turkey).

His recent exhibitions include *At the End of the Day*, a group show at OMM - Odunpazarı Modern Museum in Eskisehir, en Turkey in 2021 ; *Instructions pour couper les ficelles* at Galerie Alberta Pane, Paris in 2020; *The collection of Mr. X, The man who lived 500 years*, curator: Joana P. R. Neves, at Galerie Alberta Pane in Venice in 2019. He presented a solo show for *Drawing Now Art Fair* in Paris in 2019 ; in 2015 he presented his work on the exhibition *Les fragments de l'amour*, curator: Léa Bismuth, at La Traverse Contemporary Art Center, in Alfortville, France, also in *Recto/Verso* at the Vuitton Foundation. The same year he presented his solo show *Érothéisme le dessin sacré* at the Galerie Alberta Pane in Paris. In 2015 he was exposed also in *Documents 1945 - 2015*, URDLA, in Villeurbanne, and in *Focus de Résonance* in the 13th Lyon Biennale, among others. In 2014 in Paris *23 rue de la Boétie*; in *Back at the River's edge* at Galeria Starter in Varsovie, Poland, in *GRA-PHIC, Dessin contemporain*, PHAKT at centre Colombier in Rennes, France. In 2012 in *Plutôt comme un soupçon que comme une certitude* at Saffir Galerie Nomade in Marseille, and in *TOUT doit disparaître*, at Atelier des Vertus in Paris. In 2011, he presented the solo show *Deux lunes à l'autre* at Galerie Alberta Pane in Paris and *ICI NICE* in Nice, France.

His work is featured in the 2018 *Hazan Guide to Contemporary Art* by Roxana Azimi. In 2015 his catalog *Frictions et cri de soie* was published. It presents texts by Roxana Azimi, Léa Bismuth, Anne Collongues, Charline Guibert, Frédéric Farrucci, Jérémie Scheidler, Marie Lisel and Tristan Trémeau. Among the articles that have appeared in the French press are *Introducing João Vilhena* by Léa Bismuth published on Artpress in 2014 and *Coup de cœur* by Evelyne Deret in Le Quotidien de l'art in 2015.

His work is part of the collection of the CNAP (Centre National des arts plastiques, France), the Rothschild Bank collection in Lisbon, Portugal, and the OMM - Odunpazarı Modern Museum, Eskisehir, Turkey, as well as numerous private collections.