

Amy Sillman
Clément Rodzielski
Étienne-Martin

The Harlequin's Dog

June 6 — July 22, 2026



With *The Harlequin's Dog*, Amy Sillman opens a dialogue between her work and that of Clément Rodzielski and Étienne-Martin, taking the figure of Harlequin as a starting point—understood not as a narrative character, but as an unstable structure grounded in fragmentation, the shifting of roles, and the multiplication of identities.

Across the three artists, each practice unfolds not through linear development but through displacement, assemblage, and reconfiguration. This logic produces forms in which figural identity remains unpredictable, continually interlacing between figuration, abstraction, and theatricality.

The title emerges from a set of cross-references: Étienne-Martin's sculpture *Arlequin ou Novalis*, made towards the end of his life, and the marginal, almost indiscernible presence of a dog hidden behind a figure dressed as Harlequin in Pablo Picasso's *Three Musicians* (1921). These elements function as indices of a construction of the image in which the relations between centre and periphery, figure and background, color and form, and even animal and human, are no longer hierarchically organized. For Étienne-Martin, this involves questioning sculpture as a stable, finished, and autonomous object; for Picasso, a rethinking of hierarchies within the composition itself—both participating in a broader shift in the conditions under which images become legible.

In a similar way, Amy Sillman's paintings are built through layering, erasure, and revision, often leaving visible traces of doubt and transformation on the surface. The artist has described painting as a form of "thinking in public," where mistakes and revisions are constitutive of the process rather than concealed. Sillman articulates figuration and abstraction in unstable compositions that resist fixed meaning, traversed by humour and a psychological tension that challenge the somber manner traditionally associated with modernist abstraction. For this exhibition, Sillman has proposed small stages as the grounds for the "figures" that the various works embody.

Since the beginning of his practice, Clément Rodzielski has interrogated the presence of images, their mechanisms of appearance, and their conditions of existence. Beyond appropriation or détournement, he develops protocols that he applies to his paintings. He works through cutting and assembling heterogeneous materials, such as fragments of Zentai suits—Japanese garments drawn from performative and fetish practices that envelop the body like a second skin and allow it to merge with colour.

The exhibition thus focuses on zones of destabilization within representation: color as a primary logic, silhouettes, iterative repetitions, peripheral elements, and oblique gestures, not to mention the actual "staging" of artworks, which shift the reading of images towards processes of montage and disjunction. It engages with the contemporary status of representation, especially when marked by a sense of animation and humor that can be produced when forms are continuously recirculated and reconfigured.

Amy Sillman (b. 1955, Detroit, USA) is widely recognized as one of the most significant painters of her generation. Her practice is known for its layered, process-driven surfaces, where humor, doubt, and improvisation disrupt the authority of modernist abstraction. Beyond painting, she works with zines, writing, printmaking, and animation, expanding painting into a broader field of image-making and critical reflection.

Sillman has exhibited widely since the 1990s. Solo exhibitions of her work have been presented at Kunstmuseum, Bern (2024); Ludwig Forum, Aachen (2025); Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis (2021); Camden Arts Centre, London (2018); Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York (2017); The Drawing Center, New York (2017); Portikus, Frankfurt am Main (2016); Kunsthaus Bregenz (2015-2016), among others.

Work by the artist is held in important institutions worldwide including Art Institute of Chicago; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Lenbachhaus, Munich; Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris; Museum Brandhorst, Munich; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Clément Rodzielski (b. 1979, Albi, France) queries the original meaning of images through their channels of distribution and reproduction. According to principles of duplication and re-presentation of the images used, the artist poses a reflection of the tumult of images from visual communication.

Clément Rodzielski's work has been shown in a number of international institutions, including: Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris (2021; 2017; 2010); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2020; 2009); Kunstverein Langenhagen (2019); Goton, Paris (2017); Villa Arson, Nice (2015); Synagogue de Delme (2015); CNEAI, Chatou (2014); Indipendenza, Roma (2014); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2012; 2008; 2009); FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims (2012); Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris (2011; 2009); Bétonsalon Centre d'art et de recherche, Paris (2005).

Clément Rodzielski's works have joined the collections of the following institutions: Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Musée d'art Moderne de Paris; Centre national des Arts Plastiques, Paris; Kadist Foundation, Paris; FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims; FRAC Île-de-France, Paris; FRAC Grand Large — Hauts de France, Dunkerque.

Étienne-Martin (1913, Loriol-sur-Drôme—1995, Paris, France) was a major French sculptor of the 20th century. His work, shaped by abstraction and expressionism, follows a distinctly singular path within the modernist sculpture of his time. His anti-formalism, his indifference to the finished object, and his use of unusual materials and techniques such as gilt fabrics and polychromed wood represent a radical departure in the history of sculpture. After his captivity in Germany and the end of the war, his work became marked by a complex spiritual quest and by Eastern religions such as Taoism.

In 1954, Étienne-Martin began his *Demeures* (Dwellings) series, for which he became widely known. In 1966, he was awarded the Grand Prize for Sculpture at the 33rd Venice Biennale. He was professor and head of the sculpture department from 1968 to 1983 at the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He was elected to the Académie des beaux-arts in 1971.

In 1984, an exhibition bringing together all his *Demeures* was held at the Centre Pompidou in Paris. In 2010, a new exhibition at the Centre Pompidou paid tribute to the artist, followed by a retrospective at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon in 2011–2012.