

Merlin Carpenter

*Art Paris Basel*

24 October – 16 November 2025

Opening Thursday 23 October, 6–9 pm

Press release :

The exhibition *Art Paris Basel* presents eight new works by Merlin Carpenter made of wood frames and hooks. Four of them are painted blue and hung on the wall like paintings in the front room. Four others, in brown, are suspended from the ceiling in the back room, inspired by decorations that started appearing in English pubs around the 1970s.

Each work incorporates various kitchenware borrowed from holiday homes or secondary houses. Coffee cups, mugs, bowls, glasses with handles, saucepans, frying pans, and other items appear here before they are returned to their owners as part of specific instructions proposed by the artist in response to his invitation to show at *di volta in volta*.

For each subsequent acquisition or presentation of these works, different "rustic-minimal" objects should be hung by the collector from their own holiday home or secondary house. In the case of a museum or institution, objects are to be chosen from the curator's, director's, board member's, or patron's holiday homes - persons connected with the showing space.

For this first presentation of the *Holiday Homes* series, most of the objects have been borrowed from Agnès Troublé, renowned grandmother of the two curators of the show, Joseph and Jean, and from the artist himself.

While the economic and family networks underlying the program *di volta in volta* become visible to the visitors, the decorative character of the installation undermines the capacity of such interventions to reveal these structures as a mode of institutional critique. It reflects the now almost complete immanence of its own negativity to the social relations of production of value in exchange, although reflexively incorporated in Merlin Carpenter's works.

But, between private and public space, real estate and art, *Art Paris Basel* turns the seemingly anecdotal presence of coffee cups into the mark of dependency on surplus value and labor division within a context of deepening structural crisis of capital and authoritarian neoliberalism.

Yet, rather than displaying a form of complicity, and beyond the demonstration of the functionality of the supports as tested and approved in real life, Merlin Carpenter employs blank readymade wall pieces based on a "grid" as if they were a cross section of the 3D model he has been experimenting with, allowing him to reiterate and test certain hypotheses about interchangeable or smeared together places and times such as Paris, Basel, or online.

Born in 1967 in Pembury (UK), Merlin Carpenter lives and works in London (and Berlin).

*di volta in volta*, 18 Rue Volta, 75003 Paris  
Friday – Saturday, 1-6 pm & by appointment  
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