

Astérides

FRICHE  
LA BELLE  
DE MAI

# CLAIRE TABOURET

## + *CASH FOR GOLD LIKE SMOKE FOR MIRRORS AND LAND FOR SEA*

WITH PAUL + MARLENE KOS,  
TAKESHI MURATA, AND MUNGO THOMSON



CLAIRE TABOURET *The Gold Miners*, 2017 (various details)

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26 AUGUST–24 OCTOBER, 2017

Curator: Lauren Mackler

A proposal from Astérides

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### OPENING TIME

Wednesday–Friday, 2–7 pm

Saturday and Sunday, 1–7 pm

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### GUIDED TOUR

Guided tour of the exhibitions every Saturday and Sunday. More information on the online agenda can be found at [www.lafriche.org](http://www.lafriche.org). The tour is included in the entrance ticket, without reservation.

For more information about these visits, school reservations and social centers, contact the team of la Friche la Belle de Mai:

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## AS A PRELUDE:

*This exhibition of Claire Tabouret's work is the culmination of a residency the artist held in Marseille, from January to June 2011. In this show, Tabouret revisits the work she made at that time from the vantage point of her current studio in Los Angeles and alongside newly produced paintings and prints. These new works—large-scale pieces freestanding in the architecture of the gallery—will host the older works hung on their reverse, literally stacking time, and dividing space. This unusual installation of fronts and reverses will also allow the viewer to consider their position—what they face, what they turn their back to—just as the artist does, in both sites, standing between land and sea. As a subject for her new pieces, Tabouret will consider the ambition to move west: the promise of citrus, space, celebrity, and of course, gold. This exhibition collapses time, draws from personal experience as well as social history, and traces a line between two very different and semi-fictional places, both at water's edge.*

*Unconventionally, this exhibition is layered with another exhibition in the same space, entitled *Cash for Gold* like *Smoke for Mirrors* and *Land for Sea*, which includes the work of Paul and Marlene Kos, Takeshi Murata, Mungo Thomson and other artifacts.*

## FIRST,

Some biographical undergirding: In 2011, Claire Tabouret spent two weeks on water. More precisely, riding the SNCM commercial ferries back and forth between Marseille and Alger in long, nonsensical journeys during which she wouldn't even disembark before setting off on her return. Like an unofficial member of the crew, or a residency at sea, she roamed the Mediterranean 20 hours in one direction, then simply turned around with the ship and replayed the same trajectory in reverse. In retrospect, she will tell you she sought the moment in which land first appears, a sliver at first on the ledge of the sea, a mirage, then a mound and a reality. She was interested in vantage points, the direction of her body—what it faces, what it turns its back to—and her line of sight. Much like standing in front of a canvas on which one can create a universe, standing at sea gave her a perspective on land and the same slippery uncertainty as to which ground was truly more solid. A year later Tabouret moved to Los Angeles: a parched landscape of sand, succulents, cacti and swimming pools, under the brazen Southern California sun. It has been said, by many accounts, that Los Angeles *plays itself*<sup>1</sup>: it is both a character and a set for a series of prototypical storylines, trafficking in the iconic and in flimsy aspirations, the first of which is perhaps the blind ambition to strike (sometimes proverbial) gold. In fact, the pull to move west is an ambition on loop: its commodity may change, but the drive remains essentially the same. It is part instinct, part commerce and part hubris; it is colonization and greed but also migration and escape.

## IN TWOS,

Commingled in the galleries of Astérides are two shows, superimposed: On one hand Claire Tabouret's paintings and prints depict characters out of time, that is, characters you might not be able to place, unlinked to an era or story: they are adventurers, gold rushers, smugglers, refugees, men and women who have sorted out a transaction, an escape route. That these characters transcend recognizable time is an illusion that painting, like science fiction, can provide: one that implies metaphorical narratives, idioms and leaps of the imagination on behalf of the viewer. They are a fixed blur, a stand-in for movement—or rather, for bodies moving transactionally, archetypically, like actors playing a part. They are *Hollywoodian*, or in *Hollywoodian time*, which is recurring and non-linear.

On the other hand—in a parallel exhibition—a series of artworks and artifacts play with the tinsel of Hollywood: rear projections, clever editing techniques, and cinematic parlor tricks. This second layer to our presentation contextualizes the first while complicating it, blurring the line between background and subject, frame and content. It showcases works by additional artists as well as scenographic elements quoting from cinema.

Included in this presentation is Takeshi Murata's *Infinite Doors*, a video collaging the reward “reveal” moments of *The Price is Right*, a prize-oriented game show on American television in which desire and excess are staged in tableaux of consumer goods. Behind each door, in an endless loop, seductive women model new treasures while an ecstatic voiceover exalts the prizes by calling their names with almost comedic timing and feigned surprise. The video's seemingly bottomless well of goods stresses the saccharine soundstages in which the prizes are presented, the ever-peaking rush of anticipation and the inevitable (albeit un-depicted) disappointment that might follow. The video's abundant reveal and persistently climactic excitement parallels the *Gold Rush*, stressing the insatiability of addiction (be it gambling, colonizing, hunting or consuming), and the escapism that exists in the suspended state of searching. While the film and its square aspect ratio lend a nostalgic air, this American condition feels all the more current as it has only been exacerbated in the American psyche by updated game shows such as *The Apprentice*—whose theme song staccatos *Money money money money...money...* ad nauseam—and the outcome of their stars.

Additionally on view, but this time staged as a glowing rear-projection backdrop, is Mungo Thomson's *American Landscape (for Chuck Jones)*, which is also a collage of footage but this time an almost silent painterly wash of landscapes from the American desert as depicted by Chuck Jones, the renown Warner Bros. Looney Tunes animator. In this projected work, Thomson strings together cartoon scenes while excluding the stories' narrative components, leaving only the interstitial moments in which no characters are present (one assumes—unable to ascertain for sure—that we are privy to the in-between spaces of the Road Runner, given the rock-and-sand pictorials). The video, by its omissions, emphasizes the landscape turning the camera on its viewer, who herself might feel as if in a state of abandon, like the last (wo)man on Earth, a trespassing interloper in what Rachel Kushner describes as “Chuck Jones's blithe, deliberate distillation of a mythological West”—albeit in this case, a myth spoofed for television. Thomson, an artist persistently interested in scale and otherworldliness, transports the quiet stillness of the desert to the gallery—setting us in a space apt for outlaws, artists (and then eventually the American military)—and his piece is treated here, like his content, both as subject and as set.

Lastly and still on repeat, Paul and Marlene Kos's 1976 *Lightning* flashes on a third monitor. In it, a female lead confronts the camera squarely, employing a cinematic sleight of hand to pretend she is directing lightning simply by looking away from it: “When I look for the lightning, it never strikes. When I look away, it does.” This work is one of the conceptual art duo's exercises in using the TV screen as a proscenium to stage illusions, treating the monitor as a sculpture, the audience as a participant and reality as an extra. Set in the intimacy of a car, with a Golden Age reference to rear projection, the viewer is made to feel as though she were sitting in the back seat, witness to the character's plight—or magic. This video proposes a reevaluation of the line between the happenstance and the scripted, fact and fiction, our reality and the fourth wall.

## INCONCLUSIVELY,<sup>3</sup>

This show is a proposition, set at a narrative standstill, a moment wherein everything lives a bit out of context and out of frame. With its slow movements and quiet urgency, its presentation is labored, weary—indeed, its various parts show the traces of the associated labor: a series of tired gold rushers, a large scaffold carries the marks of the painter, the fabricator, the welder. The exhibition is comprised of water and drought, bodies and landscapes—conceptually and formally it is unapologetically unfinished.

### Lauren Mackler

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1. This parlance's meaning is self-evident but it seems worth noting that "L.A. Plays Itself" was also the title of the cult classic porno by Fred Halsted and then later the seminal documentary by Thom Anderson, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, on the reuse of various sites in the City of Angels for films of wildly different eras and narrative, highlighting that LA is indeed an actor playing a part, or rather the promiscuous and pleasing part of LA itself, flexing to its users' needs.

2. Rachel Kushner, "Tree and Rock and Cloud," *Mungo Thomson: Cuenca*, published by University Art Museum, 2004.

3. Anecdotally, the catalyst for the subject of this show is Claire's purchase of a small house on the site of a mine off the grid in the Mojave. Her new house, once owned by a rare (and literal) female gold digger, features somewhat mysteriously as the backdrop to this show as some of the images around the gallery are cell-phone snapshots she took while scouting the land. Her new purchase and our ongoing conversation also inspired us to field-trip to the Warner Bros. studio, lured by the elevated and cartoonish water tower hovering above the arid hillsides of Burbank, California, to see props and consider our context.



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### WORK ON VIEW :

#### Claire Tabouret

##### *The Gold Miners*, 2017

30 monotypes on paper, aluminum scaffolding, magnets.  
51 × 38 cm

#### Claire Tabouret

##### *Tired Gold Miner (yellow)*, 2017

Acrylic on canvas. 275 × 350 cm

#### Claire Tabouret

##### *Tired Gold Miner (blue)*, 2017

Acrylic on canvas. 275 × 350 cm

#### Claire Tabouret

##### *Tired Gold Miner (red)*, 2017

Acrylic on canvas. 275 × 350 cm

#### Paul and Marlène Kos

##### *Lightning*, 1976

#### Takeshi Murata

##### *Infinit Doors*, 2010

#### Mungo Thomson

##### *The American Desert (For Chuck Jones)*, 2002

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**CLAIRE TABOURET** (b. 1981 Pertuis, France) received her B.F.A. the École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris in 2006 and studied at the Cooper Union in 2005. She has recently exhibited at Night Gallery, Los Angeles, Rachel Uffner Gallery, New York, Palazzo Fruscione, Salerno, Italy, The Drawing Center, New York, Galerie Bugada & Cargnel, Paris, the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Saint-Lô, the Palazzo Grassi, Venice, the Maison Guerlain, Paris, and the Galerie du Jour Agnès b, Paris. Her work has been acquired by major collections and is notably part of Pinault Collection, Agnès b, and FRAC Auvergne, among others. Tabouret lives and works in Los Angeles.

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**PAUL AND MARLÈNE KOS** (both b.1942 in Wyoming and California, respectively ) are conceptual artists and life partners who worked together and one of the founders of the Bay Area Conceptual Art movement in California. Paul Kos (together with his contemporaries Vito Acconci, Howard Fried, and Bruce Nauman) was one of the first artists to incorporate video, sound, and interactivity into his sculptural installations.

**TAKESHI MURATA** (b. 1974, Chicago, Illinois) earned a BFA in Film/Video/Animation from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1997. Murata has exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; MALBA, Buenos Aires (both 2016); Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw (2014); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2012); Bergen Kunsthall, Norway; The Henry Art Gallery, Seattle (both 2011); The New Museum, New York (2010); The Museum of Modern Art, New York and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (both 2007); Ratio 3 (2006, 2007, 2011, 2013, 2017), San Francisco; and Salon 94, New York (2012 and 2014). As well as the K11 Art Foundation in Shanghai and the MCA Chicago (2016). Murata lives and works in Los Angeles.

**MUNGO THOMSON** (b.1969 Woodland, California) has had solo exhibitions, projects, and performances at Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada; The High Line, New York, USA; Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, USA; The Times Museum, Guangzhou, China; The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, USA; The Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, France; and GAMEc, Bergamo, Italy, among others. His work was included in the 2nd CAFAM Biennale, Beijing, China; Pacific Standard Time, Los Angeles, USA; the 12th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, Turkey; the 2008 Whitney Biennial, New York, USA; PERFORMA 01, New York, USA; and 9th Biennial of the Moving Image, Geneva, Switzerland. Recent group exhibitions include those at The Jewish Museum, New York, USA; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA; Galeria Zero, Milan, Italy; Ballroom Marfa, Marfa, USA; Museo Jumex, Mexico City, Mexico; Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt; and Gagosian Gallery, Rome, Italy. Thomson lives and works in Los Angeles.

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## ABOUT ASTÉRIDES

Astérides is a non for profit arts organisation committed to the production and exhibition of contemporary visual arts. At the heart of Astérides is its residency, exhibition and critical talks program based in la Friche la Belle de Mai in Marseille since 1992. Astérides aims to make contemporary art accessible to a wide audience.

Astérides is resident at la Friche la Belle de Mai. Astérides is a member of Marseille expos – Marseille network art places and galleries and founding member of Arts en résidence – national network (federation of artist residencies in France).

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## PARTNERSHIP

**Astérides is supported by** DRAC Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Conseil Régional Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Conseil Départemental des Bouches-du-Rhône and City of Marseille.

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