

GALLERY LES BOIS, LONDON'S FIRST SUSTAINABLE ART GALLERY: THE ETHICAL ART COLLECTOR'S DESTINATION

Written by Sanaer Madden

'Sustainable Art' has seemed, for a long time, like an oxymoron. The art industry is not one known for its commitment to the environment. The global art market is worth \$65 billion a year, in that same period, the industry produces over 70 million tons of CO₂ - which is more than the entire country of Austria. For an industry that speaks the language of beauty, the art world is leaving



Artist: Laurine Malengreau, Photo courtesy of Laurine Malengreau.

behind a trail of destruction. Art possesses the unique power of causing complete cultural shifts, and one London gallery is spearheading the shift toward sustainability in the art world. Gallery Les Bois is London's first sustainability-led commercial art gallery with a mission to showcase that sustainable art can be beautiful, conceptually rich, and investment worthy all at once. Pioneering a tidal shift in the art world, this gallery proves that sustainability isn't an obstacle to creativity; it's a catalyst. Established in 2024, Gallery Les Bois boasts a cohort of award-winning artists taking a bold, new approach to ecological responsibility. Whether it be repurposing industrial debris or turning pollutants into pigments, each artist at Gallery Les Bois offers something completely new to the art industry. It is innovation like we have never seen before. From the artist's ethical production methods and inventive ►



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"The core ethos of Gallery Les Bois is to place sustainability, integrity, and aesthetic excellence at the centre of everything we do."

Artist Jasmine Pradisitto (left) and Founder and Director Claire-Julia Hill (right) at 'Offline' Exhibition © Gallery Les Bois. Photographer: Ryan O'Donoghue.

mediums to environmentally-conscious gallery operations, sustainability is at the heart of everything Gallery Les Bois does.

THE GALLERY'S MISSION

Founder and Director Claire-Julia Hill's fascination with the intersection of art and ecology began while studying History of Art at the University of Cambridge. Captivated by lectures on green building, eco-architecture, and sustainable engineering in other departments across Cambridge - which Hill would sneak into outside of her own lectures - her passion for this rapidly growing subject was sparked. In History of Art, there was a lack of conversation around ecology. After university, Hill kickstarted her career in Iceland; drawn to the country's eco-centric nature, rooted in low-impact traditions, she was inspired to drive these environmental features into the global gallery scene. Creating a brand new gallery model with the aim of rewriting the narrative on art and sustainability from the ground up, Hill

launched Gallery Les Bois in 2024. Striving for environmental responsibility and artistic excellence in equal measure, Hill states that "The core ethos of Gallery Les Bois is to place sustainability, integrity, and aesthetic excellence at the centre of everything we do... our mission is to champion artists who are redefining contemporary art through crucially ambitious and ecologi-

cally conscious practices". Here are five of those artists' trailblazing methods, making a real-world impact on the art industry today.

FROM POLLUTANTS TO PAINTINGS

In Ohio, acid mine drainage seeps from abandoned coal mines into the waterways. Artist John Sabraw, alongside a team of engineers and watershed experts, goes into



Artist: John Sabraw, Celestial Chroma S1 1, © Gallery Les Bois.



Artist: John Sabraw, Chroma S1 12, © Gallery Les Bois.

Artist: Volcan, 1,200 Kilometers From Home © Gallery Les Bois.



the rivers and collects the poisoned water; neutralising its acidity, bubbling oxygen through it, and pulling iron out. The clean water separates at the top, and the heavy pollution floats to the bottom. The clean water is returned to the river, and Sabraw refines the pollution into pigment powders: reds, yellows, blues, and more, which are heated at different temperatures to create different shades. Proceeds from John's paint sales go back into rejuvenating the damaged ecosystem. These pigment powders are inert, non-pollutant and can be bought on the market. Sabraw's stunning, dreamlike works are not only beautiful, but they are a mechanism for change. It is circular design in practice. Sabraw's collection actively funds the environmental cleanup of polluted rivers whilst also offering an ecologically conscious alternative for artists on the market - tackling both ends of the problem.

POLLUTION-ABSORBING SCULPTURES

Dr Jasmine Pradissitto is a quantum physicist turned sculptor, who has been pioneering NOXORBTM, a newly developed material made from recycled plastics which absorbs nitrogen dioxide pollution - the toxic gas that pours out of car exhausts and chokes our cities - from the air. One of her sculptures can clean an average-sized room of nitrogen dioxide for approximately 60 years. Pradissitto's sculptures are functional ecosystems that breathe like a tree. Imagine walking through a city where every sculpture, every mural, every piece of public art was also a lung. That is Pradissitto's vision. By transforming contamination into regeneration, these sculptures are nothing short of extraordinary.

TEXTILE WASTE TRANSFORMED INTO DYNAMIC SCULPTURE

Recipient of the Sculptor of the Year Singulart Award, Sienna Martz is a unique sculptor whose works are handwoven from plant-based fibres, recycled fabrics, and second-hand textiles that would have otherwise ended up in landfill. Tactile, texturally com-

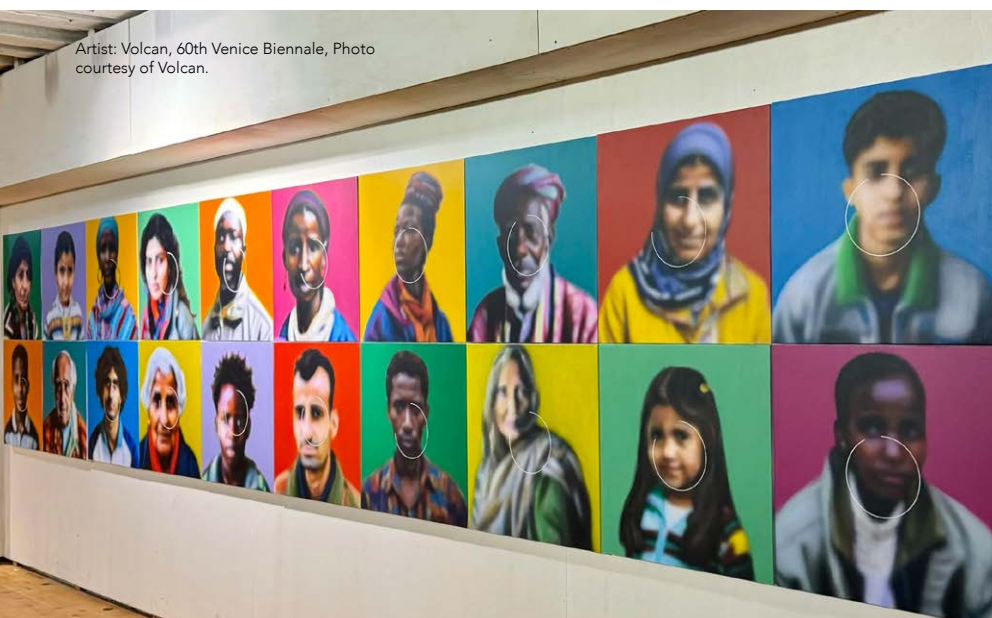


Artist: Sienna Martz, Photographer: Joy Masi, Photo rights owned by Sienna Martz.

plex, and joyously vibrant, Martz's practice is entirely sustainable. She refuses to use wool, leather, or animal products, ensuring her practice is not only sustainable but also cruelty-free. In an industry where textiles are one of the most polluting sectors in the world - responsible for around 10% of global carbon emissions and 20% of wastewater - her choice of material is a radical act. Martz's intricate, organic sculptures are often woven, knotted, or stitched into meditative forms, highlighting the importance of slow art in a hectic, fast-paced world. Each piece carries the memory of what was thrown away, now reborn as something beautiful and lasting. ►



Artist: Sienna Martz with MagMoon, Photographer: Joy Masi, Photo rights owned by Sienna Martz.



Artist: Volcan, 60th Venice Biennale, Photo courtesy of Volcan.

HUMAN SUSTAINABILITY AND THE POWER OF ART

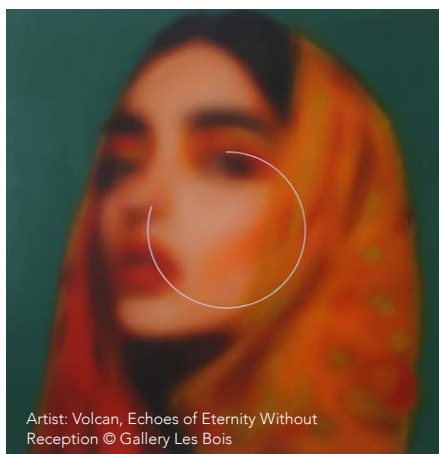
Dutch-Colombian artist duo Volcan, who recently exhibited at the 60th Venice Biennale, produce conceptually powerful and emotionally effective pieces. They reconstruct urban debris into layered, mixed-media artworks which explore resilience, memory, identity, and survival whilst promoting sustainability by repurposing overlooked materials from city streets. Volcan's 'Roadworks' series explores urban environmentalism through the use of upcycled tar, paint, tyres and, waste fragments; a tension exists between the harsh materials and thoughtful artistic process, reflecting a poignant relationship between humanity and the city. Volcan's 'Offline' series was at the heart of Gallery Les Bois' recent exhibition 'Offline' in Notting Hill. Displayed at the Venice Biennale, the series consisted of twenty portraits of refugees who died crossing the Mediterranean; the subjects' faces are illustrated blurred with an incomplete, delicate white circle over the centre, alluding to the symbol that appears when an image is loading. Here, the loading symbol hauntingly gestures to the incomplete journeys and lost lives of refugees.

GALLERY LES BOIS FOR GLOBAL ARTISTIC CHANGE

Not only does Gallery Les Bois represent sustainable and environmentally-conscious artists, but their entire business model is sustainably-minded. Carbon-tracked global shipping, ecologically sensible packaging, writing to art material suppliers urging them to create environmental solutions to the

problems their supply chain creates; there is no challenge they will not tackle. It has been an exciting year for Gallery Les Bois, but they also aim to make it an exciting time for others. Aiming to help businesses meet their ESG credentials, partnering with corporate entities on sustainable art collections, supplying commercial design businesses, as well as providing an inspiring, new option for private art collectors - Gallery Les Bois confronts sustainability issues head-on. This is the horizon of a broader cultural and environmental shift in the art world.

Sustainable art doesn't mean compromising on beauty - ethics and aesthetics can, and should, coexist. Gallery Les Bois proves that sustainable art is beautiful, conceptually rich, and investment worthy. During a time of climate emergency, sustainability is the future; Gallery Les Bois is paving the way for the art market to be a mechanism for change and make a real impact on saving our planet. □



Artist: Volcan, Echoes of Eternity Without Reception © Gallery Les Bois



Artist: Rex, Volcan. Photo courtesy of Volcan.

