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BY FRIEZE
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Arcade Athletics and Eco-Feminist Mythology: the Exhibitions to See in Los Angeles

From Faith Wilding's animistic deities to Pierre Guyotat's orgiastic drawings, the *frieze* editors review their favourite shows in LA



Pierre Guyotat, *Untitled*, c.
2017. Courtesy: The Box, LA

Pierre Guyotat and Christophe von Weyhe, 'Scenes and Stages'

[The Box](#)

2 February - 30 March

German painter Christophe von Weyhe and French novelist Pierre Guyotat appear to have little in common, except, as the press release asserts, in their mutual interest in 'time and theatricality'. Their works – presented in the two-person show 'Scenes and Stages', curated by Donatien Grau – are not intermixed, but appear separately throughout The



Box, from its sweeping front rooms to its cozier ones in the back. Von Weyhe's large paintings capture the moody industrialism of the Port of Hamburg, which he has been painting for 40 years, while Guyotat's drawings depict men and women copulating and self-pleasuring, sometimes in the presence of curious dogs. I was most struck by Guyotat, whose drawings offer a surprising charm and levity, given the extremities of his fiction. His writing often delves into the oozing, wounded depths of gay desire, where the body submits to pleasure only to be destroyed by it. At least in part; the thing is, you always seem to survive long enough for the next agonizing episode of hunger and want. In an introduction to the English edition of *Coma*, his 2006 book about a man who self-induces a comatose state through starvation, the novelist Gary Indiana writes that Guyotat's 'abjection is a desire for transcendence that necessarily constitutes a struggle against the body, against physiological need.' Despite years of censorship of his work, his notion of sexuality isn't 'revolutionary', though it is commonly said to be, so much as it is affirmative. What we see in these drawings are plump bodies in the midst of familiar pleasures, up to and including orgiastic fervour (oh, yes). They are pretty and competent. The absence of flourish makes these works so arresting. Women open their legs, men stand with pricks erect. Their faces and bodies are never so original as to distinguish them from one another. But that isn't the point. Who hasn't fallen in bed, or among men lying on the bathhouse floor, and found themselves in these exact position with these exact faces? That is, a blank: round head, two dots for eyes, open mouths. Ready, wanting. 'Revolutionary' indeed, as only the perfectly ordinary can sometimes be.

Andrew Durbin

