



EMILE RUBINO

House-trained

23.05.-21.06.2025

LambdaLambdaLambda hosted by Hussenot at La Cuisine, Paris

Press release :

This show could have been called *A Corner of the Studio*, to borrow the title of a small Eugène Delacroix painting (c. 1830) that I adore, in which the painter depicts a stove and some buckets piled up behind a movable screen in his Paris studio. When I was a student in Vancouver, I spent a lot of time thinking about a work by Ian Wallace also called *Corner of the Studio* (1993)—a partial view of the artist’s workspace with a daybed, a chair, and some music equipment in front of large windows. From the basement where I lived, I remember thinking about Wallace’s interior in relation to Gwen John’s even more pared down *A Corner of the Artist’s Room in Paris* (1907-09)—a picture I liked because the attic room she painted felt both aspirational and relatable to me. In all three depictions, there is no direct, visible evidence of the studio as a site of production or intellectual labor.

Writing about his piece, Wallace mentions the inconspicuous presence of an open book on the bed in his picture. He explains that the poem by Mallarmé in this book came to function, for him, as “a cipher for the ‘unreadable’ at those moments when there seemed to be ‘nothing to say.’” (1) For me, his formulation beautifully describes what I found in these works as a student—pressured by the demand for aboutness, and burdened by the “vulgar specificity of photographic representation.” (2) At the time, without a studio of my own, the idea of a place where nothing could be turned into nothingness by applying self-reflexivity to it seemed like a desirable form of escape.

This show could also have been called *In this economy...* In this economy, my studio is not a light-filled space with comfortable armchairs. These days, it’s really just a desk, a closet, and an off-white wall in the corner of a shared office with grey carpet and a drop ceiling. Across the room, an inflatable armchair and a large bean bag, which no one remembers bringing in, make up the communal hangout space.

Every house comes with rules and the many shared artist studios I’ve worked in or photographed over the years are no exception. I admit to muting the endless group chats about unpaid beer tabs, and who forgot to take the trash out. In my current studio in Brussels, I often feel like a college kid putting a sock on the doorknob when I text my roommates to ask if they’d be okay with me having the space to myself for an upcoming studio visit. There are days when I go to the studio without really knowing what I am going to do there. On a bad day, going to this shared office space, makes me feel like a more integrated part of society. I tell myself, *this is where I domesticate my pictures. And if a few of them sell, I could buy a daybed*. I wonder if the added comfort would have me make pictures that would be more like “good armchairs” and less like inflatable ones?

With photography, everything tends to be oriented toward direct forms of production—there is the darkroom, the computer lab, the lighting studio and then there’s the street. As a young

(1) Ian Wallace, “Corner of the Studio and El Taller, A Reflection on Two Works from 1993”, in *Ian Wallace: In The Studio* (Vancouver: Charles H. Scott Gallery, 2005), 31.

(2) Ibid., 33.



teacher I have been thinking about the fact that most art schools don't provide photography students with a corner of their own where they can put things up and leave them for a little while. So maybe this show is about me acknowledging the importance of boredom. The kind of boredom made possible by the studio, even if it's just a corner—the studio as a non-productive space, a state of mind, or a closet to store props and knickknacks from previous exhibitions and failed pictures. Studying later in New York, I remember one of my teachers telling me that for her, it was really important to be able to masturbate in her studio. In this economy, a studio to masturbate in almost sounds like an ambitious goal.

I sent my friend Felix the raw scans of my vibrator abstractions. He replied saying that these pictures are “my sexy take on Futurism.” He said it made him think of Giacomo Balla's famous painting *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash* (1912), which was inspired by chronophotography and bears the mark of Balla's past as an illustrator. “That's great,” I told him, “clearly a house-trained dog.” I think I was a bit depressed when I made these, and the pathetic aspect of a vibrator roaming around on its own, unconfined by an orifice, felt like a viable allegory for something—a long aperture or just a way to pass the time.

In the same way that *Dynamism of an Unleashed Dog* (2025) suggests the variable speeds and rhythmic modes of the vibrator, *According to the Microwave* (2017-2025) comes with a range of options: *frozen dinner, beverage, pizza, baked potato, popcorn* and of course, *reheat*. In French, to call something “reheated” (*du réchauffé*) is a pejorative way to express that something has already been said and done too many times. This diagonal composition with a microwave and hot plate is, in the most literal sense, a “reheated photograph”—a photograph that accepts its impotence as yet another picture about the relationship between time and photography. The number of possible iterations is defined by the number of combinations of minutes and hours in a day.

Back when I made the first microwave pictures in 2017, a close friend of mine wrote a text about them. She wrote: “According to the microwave, change descends indifferent to invitation or resistance.” I still don't really know what she meant by this, but I like it. She's a good writer. This same friend once told me I was too serious when I talked about my work. She was right. Now, I try not to come across as self-serious but it's hard to avoid the modernist-hangover vibe of making a show about the studio. Still, I find pleasure in being able to formalize a digression and carve out a mental space that gives me permission to make smaller pictures, little sculptures, and *other things*.

-Emile Rubino

Emile Rubino (*1992, French) lives and works in Brussels.

His recent solo exhibitions include WIELS Affiliate, Brussels (2024); LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina (2024); rhizome_, Kortrijk (2023); CC Strombeek, Grimbergen (2022); Situations, New York (2021).

His recent group exhibitions include KIN, Brussels (2025); Am Schwarzenbergplatz, Vienna (2024); Soft Opening, London (2024); Air de Paris, Romainville (2023); LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina (2023); FOMU, Antwerp (2022); Treize, Paris (2022); LA MAISON DE RENDEZ-VOUS, Brussels (2021).

Together with Felix Rapp, he co-edits *Le Chauffage* magazine, an artist-run publication based between Brussels and Vancouver.

His writing has appeared in *frieze*, *Text zur Kunst*, *Provence*, *CFA* and *The Capilano Review*.

This summer, he will be artist-in-residence at CAC - la synagogue de Delme.