

“Back to the Future” by Judicaël Lavrador, *Les InRockuptibles*, n°895, Paris, 2013

A remake of an exhibition from 1983, *Science-Fiction #3* is stunning in its arrangement and the simplicity of its proposal.

At the movies, this would be a remake, in musique it would be a cover. In art, there isn't really a word for this. *Science-Fiction #3* is the third episode, or the second adaptation, of an exhibition whose original version was in 1983 in New York. The artist Peter Halley organized it and notably showed works by Jeff Koons, by Donald Judd or by the abstract painter Ross Bleckner. The idea was simple: the historical avant-gardes had turned toward the future and idealized it. But at the end of the day, the future has not upheld its promise. And so now contemporary artists backpedal, and revisit utopias with either derision or with delight, but no longer believe in them.

In 1989, Le Consortium, the art center in Dijon, remade the exhibition with the same artists, but not the same pieces. And it is this franchise, in a way, that Vincent Pécoil, the director of the Galerie Triple V returns to for himself to make this third opus. If the artists are no longer the same, the discourse remains today just as pertinent, because art continues to cultivate a certain nostalgia for the future and offers what the art historian Arnauld Pierre calls retrofuturism: forms that are futuristic, but obsolete. For example, in the 3rd exhibition, the painting by David Malek which presents a lozenge form in a gradation of gloss fuchsia pink: a dazzling motif that functions like the opening to a SF series, in which the large psychedelically drawn violet neon by Blair Thurman is reflected. The sculpture by James Angus, a black ball bristling with girders evokes a kind of Sputnik, and the photo of a galaxy by Matthew McCaslin is covered by rows of pink chewing-gum, making a kind of battle scene among the stars. The future is there just as one imagined it, just as one dreamed of it during childhood. It's a future that is deliciously regressive.

Now, this exhibition does not spare its special effects. To begin with this one: it takes place on a black ground. The entire gallery has been repainted to conform with what Peter Halley had chosen for the original version and the colorful artworks burn with a thousand fires. But there was an even more crucial reasoning behind this scenography — a radical manner to criticize the “white cube”, the temple of contemporary art. “Artworks seen in such spaces, wrote Peter Halley, seem to go through a kind of aesthetic convalescence. They are seen like so many lifeless invalids, waiting for the verdict of critics on their curability or incurability.” The black walls also mourned the death of conceptual art at that time, that dream of a dematerialized art, consisting of ideas to hold in one's mind rather than objects to conserve: “Today, the American artist thus

added, art is once again entrenched in the gallery, the museum and the city; but it cannot reside in these places with the same innocent complacency as before.” The merit of *Science-Fiction #3* is to update a fact that remains just as striking. But even more than deploying a follow-up to an old exhibition, in the manner of a Bob Nickas who has also delivered numerous remakes, Vincent Pécoil does not seek originality. He seeks to make it simple. A concept that would do well to inspire many curators, who, seeking to make a name for themselves, impose upon us exhibitions with empty concepts that are pretentious, incomprehensible and already out-of-date.

