
PRESS RELEASE

Julien Mignot
So Far So Close

Exhibition	06.06 – 07.09.2024
Opening	Thursday June 6, from 6 to 9 pm In presence of the artist

The forthcoming exhibition at the gallery looks at the photographic work of French artist Julien Mignot, presenting three distinct but interconnected series: *Before the Night is Over* (2011-2023), *Today, the time is close* (2023) and *Temps présent* (2024). Brought together by the rare and meticulous Fresson printing process, these series testify to Mignot's deep engagement with the history and perceptual limits of photography. This is the artist's first solo exhibition at the gallery, comprising more than twenty pieces.

Before the Night is Over invites the viewer to follow the artist's personal journey, reminiscent of his previous project '96 Months', in which everyday life plays an important role in a ritual of capturing images that echo musical pieces. By entrusting his negatives to the Fresson technique - a method preserved since 1899 by the Fresson family - Mignot embraces the unpredictable nature of this process. This technique, characterised by its layers of pigment on 'Charbon-Satin' paper, harkens back to the Pictorialist era of photography, blurring the sharpness typical of modern photography and inviting a nostalgic reflection on the origins of the medium.

In *Today, the time is close*, Mignot explores the concept of space and its limits through fragments of sky. These unique pieces challenge our perception of space and the arbitrary limits we impose on it. The series is particularly compelling in the way it uses the horizon - a socially and subjectively constructed demarcation - to challenge viewers' spatial assumptions. Here, the horizon is not just a dividing line, but a unifying one that blends familiar realms with imaginary landscapes, redefining our engagement with the world.

Temps présent, initiated during Mignot's residency at the Planche

Contact Festival in Deauville and on the Atlantic coast, is a contemplative series that captures the transient colours of the sky from dawn to dusk. Each photograph, taken at different locations along the coast, represents a unique chromatic diary of a day, encapsulating the fleeting and ephemeral nature of time itself.

This exhibition highlights Mignot's technical mastery and innovative use of Fresson printing, but also his investigation into the very fabric of visual experience. Through his lens, Mignot captures more than just images; he captures moments of introspection, fragments of time and the fluid boundaries of our environment. His work encourages us to see beyond the obvious, to find beauty and meaning in the transient, making this exhibition a profound experience for all who enter the immersive world of his creation.



Julien Mignot, *Vaches noires*, 20 juin 2023
Fresson print
60 x 80 cm, edition of 3

Texte :
Of the horizon
Tim Ingold

*Tim Ingold is a distinguished British anthropologist known for his interdisciplinary work that weaves together anthropology, geography, and the arts to explore human-environment interactions. His influential writings, such as *The Perception of the Environment* and *Lines: A Brief History*, challenge conventional distinctions between nature and culture, advocating for a more interconnected understanding of human life.*

The horizon is the most mysterious of lines. At once a limit of vanishing and an opening to infinite possibility, it bounds our lives by a question to which there are no answers. The question is: where does it all begin; where will it ever end? There are no answers because the horizon moves as we do. We say it is where the earth, or the ocean, meets the sky, and yet we know that, in truth, they will never meet. Or is it rather that they were never truly separated in the first place? That depends on what we make of the sky.

One way to think of the sky is as a huge dome, arching over our heads, and centred on our present location. Imagine you are standing on a perfectly level plain, extending around you in all directions. The horizon would then be defined as the circle where the dome intersects the plain. We know, of course, that in reality the surface of the earth is not plane but spherical. That is why the distant ship appears to sink below the horizon as it goes out of sight, rather than diminishing to a vanishing point. Yet even with this qualification, the geometric model of the sky is confounded by experience, which tells us that unlike the ground on which we stand, or even the ocean in which we sail, the sky has no surface. Our eyes, craving the light, can plunge ever further into it, but will never strike a ceiling. Nor do clouds appear to us to hang like objects in the sky – as their fluffy replicas, in the theatre, might be suspended from the gantry of a stage-set. They seem rather to form as moisture-laden folds of the sky itself.

To understand how this is possible, we need to think of the sky in another way, not as an empty dome but as an aerial flux, stretched and crumpled by the elemental forces of wind and weather. This flux, moreover, is not just everywhere in contact with earthen soils and ocean waters. Rather, the very surfaces of the earth and the oceans are formed in their intermingling, as the rain penetrates the earth, allowing plants to grow, or as the wind whips the waves into spray. What then becomes of the horizon? On a misty or stormy day, of course, it may simply disappear. There is no line, only a sense of gradual dissolution, as whatever supports us in our immediate vicinity, be it earth or ocean, appears with increasing distance to melt and dissolve

into an ether. It is not, then, that the horizon is really there, only hidden from view by the bad weather. It is not there, period. When, therefore, the weather clears and skies brighten, the reappearance of the horizon is a moment of creation, not of revelation. From what, then, is it created?

We could ask the same question at dawn, when the line of the horizon once more emerges from black night, only to explode at sunrise into a burst of radiant light. And the answer is the same. The horizon is a creation of the light itself. To be clear, this is not light as physicists understand it, in terms of the energetics of electromagnetic rays. Light, for physicists, is the property of a universe that is objective, exterior and indifferent to our concerns. But the light from which a horizon is fashioned is the luminosity of the sky itself, whose variations we experience in its brilliance or dullness, lit by sunshine moonshine, and in the glow and sparkle of its watery reflections. It is the light of the cosmos, of a world that simultaneously surrounds and saturates our awareness. From amidst this light, we can make out surfaces and folds: of the beings and things around us, the contours of a landscape, the expanse of the sea. But in contrast to the sky, which is suffused with light throughout its volume, these phenomena wear the light on their skin. Beneath, it is dark. We perceive a horizon, then, as the line of contrast, between the translucence of the sky and the opacity of the earth and its waters.

Sometimes, however, it is difficult to tell: are those towering forms, shining white in the distance, clouds or snow-capped mountains? How do we distinguish them? Typically, we would look for the sharp edge, which silhouettes the landform against the sky. But it is different if you are flying in a plane, ten thousand metres up, over a cloud-strewn earth. For then, it is as though the clouds were themselves below a horizon which marks a transition to the azure sky above. Are clouds translucent or opaque? Well, it depends. But only if they are perceived to be opaque can they delimit a horizon. Perhaps this is why painters have always had such a struggle with horizons. Their task is to catch the variable qualities of light in their pigments. But they are normally constrained to spread these pigments on an opaque surface. Inevitably, then, the horizon appears as a transition from one shade of opacity to another – usually, if it is a daylight scene, from dark to light – rather than from opacity to translucence. However skilled the painter, the sky always seems too dense, even impenetrable, as though one could come hard up against it. And its contrast with what lies beneath never quite lives up to its real life equivalent.

Could photography do better than painting? The difference, after all, is that the photographer paints not with colours but with light itself. Could there be a way of capturing this light in such a way that, as in the sky, it is not bound to a surface but suffuses an entire volume? In a section of his *Modern Painters* of 1843, entitled 'Of the truth of skies', the critic John Ruskin has this to say of the sky: 'It is not flat dead colour, but a deep, quivering, transparent body of penetrable air, in which you trace or imagine short falling spots of deceiving light, and dim shades, faint veiled vestiges of dark vapour'. Is it not precisely this 'trembling transparency', as Ruskin calls it, that the application of Fresson technique, in these photographs by Julien Mignot, reveals to us? The technique gives the prints a glaze that seems to lift them from the surface. There could be no better proof that the sky is not an empty void, waiting to be filled, but fullness itself, in all its infinite variation.

John Ruskin: *Selected Writings*, edited by Dinah Birch, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, 11-12.

Press visual



Julien Mignot, Today, the time is close,
41.9236, -5.6047 25th March 2017 18:23:29 UTC, 2022
Fresson print
120 x 100 cm

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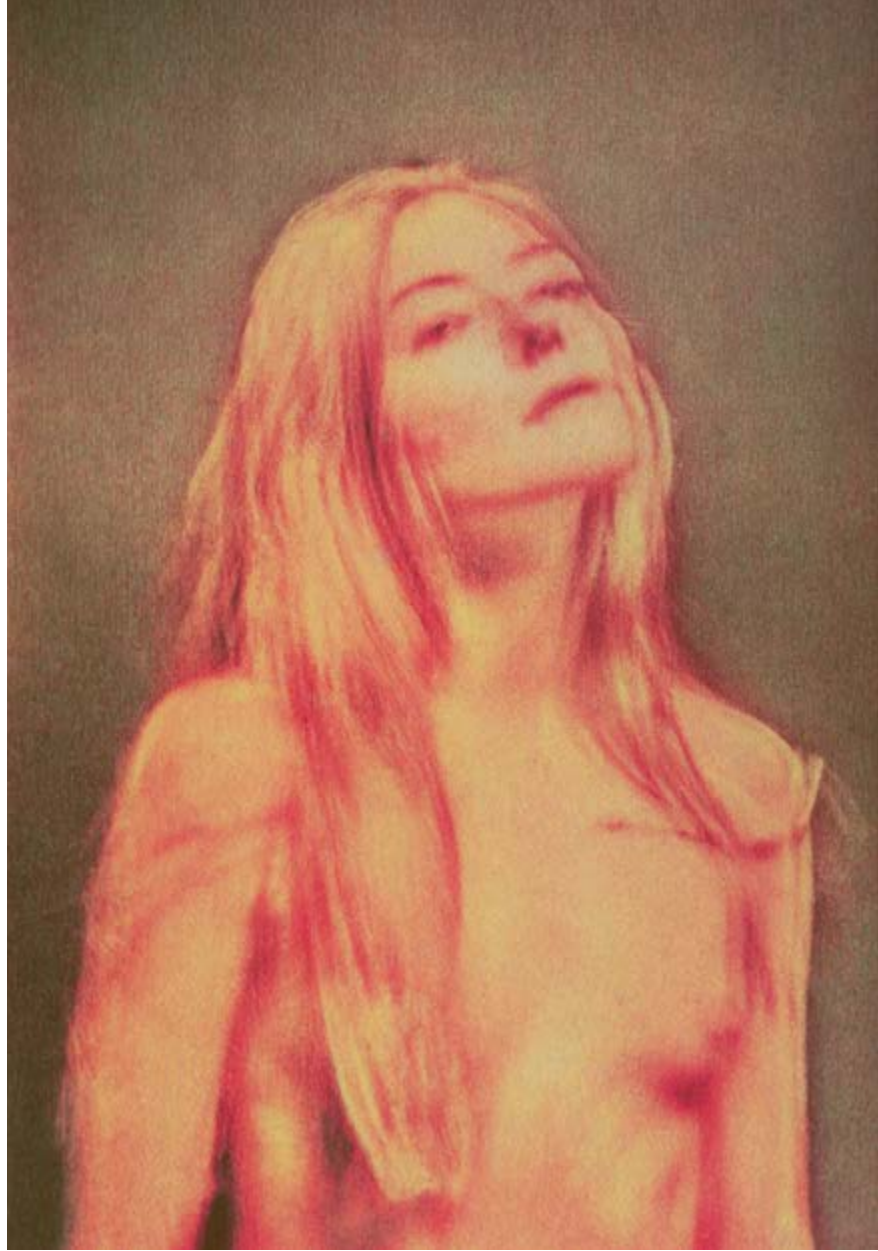
Press visual



Julien Mignot, *Solstice, 21 juin 2023*
Fresson print
60 x 80 cm, edition of 3

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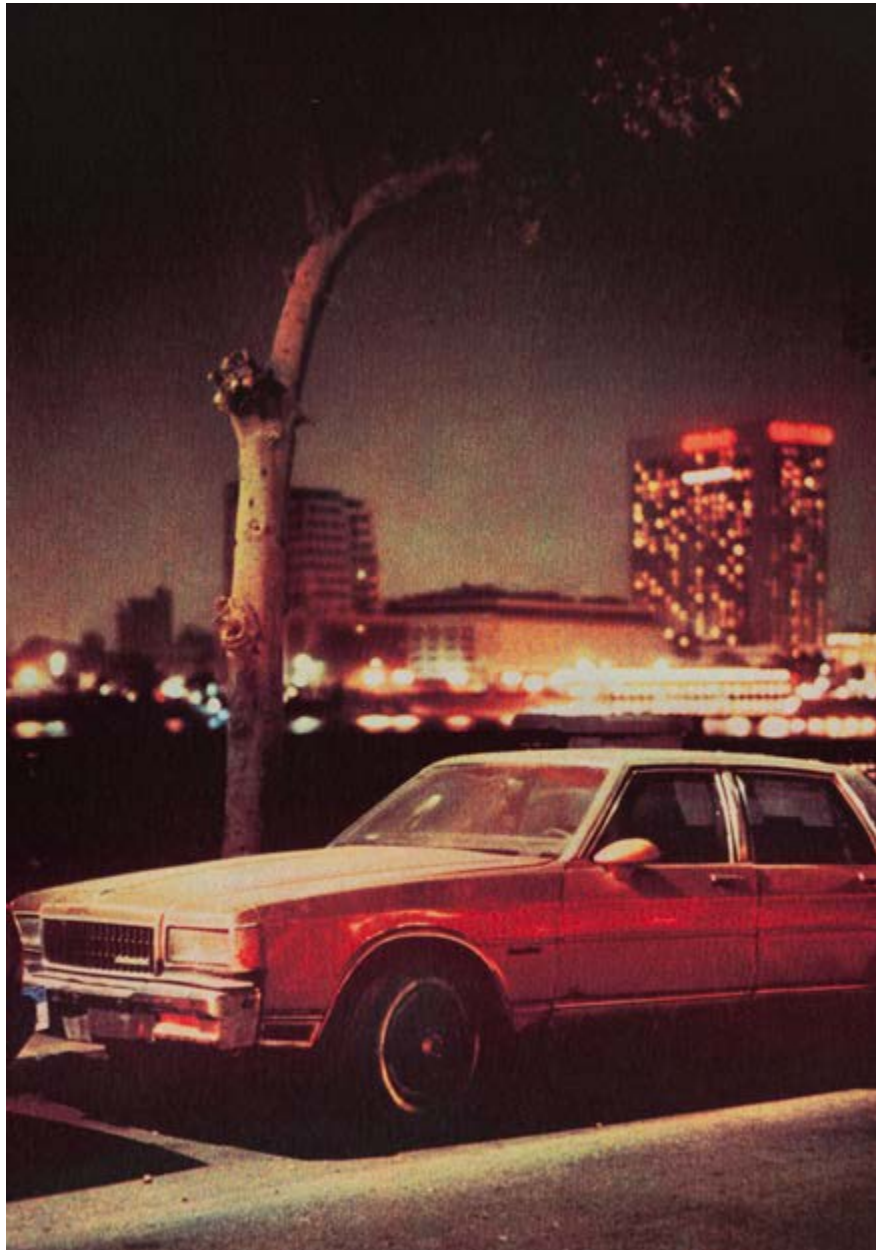
Press visual



Julien Mignot, *No Hope*, 2018
Fresson print
18 x 27 cm, edition of 3

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Press visual



Julien Mignot, *Dark Red*, 2019
Fresson print
18 x 27 cm, edition of 3

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