

EN
press release

Lauren Coullard
Uncanny Valley
February 28 – April 12, 2025

events

Opening reception: Friday, February 28, 6–9 pm | With Lauren Coullard
Book launch: Sunday, April 6 | With Lillian Davies and Lauren Coullard

press

For an exhibition preview on February 28 during the day, as well as press material, please contact the gallery.

exhibition

Galerie Mountains is pleased to announce *Uncanny Valley*, a new solo exhibition by Lauren Coullard, premiering new and recent paintings by the Paris-based artist. The exhibition deepens her engagement with the genre of portrait painting as well as the techniques of collage, in particular mixing medieval and manga imagery.

Uncanny Valley is the artist's third solo exhibition with the gallery. It spans through the main space of the gallery and includes a large-scale wallpaper installation in the gallery's shop window.



artist statement

"Painting is the moment of fire."
"My work is not in the new, but in reworking history."

biography

Lauren Coullard was born in Paris, France, in 1981, and currently lives and works in Paris. She studied at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and later earned her Master of Fine Arts from Chelsea College of Art and Design in London in 2010. In her artistic practice, Coullard works in the style of painting, collage, and installation. Her work is rooted in an extensive mix of influences, spanning symbolism, romanticism, abstract expressionism, and post-modernism. Through these references, she constructs a visual world where mythological, neo-medieval, and futuristic elements intertwine, giving rise to hybrid (super)-heroines.

Her recent solo exhibitions include: *Uncanny Valley* (with text by Lillian Davies), Galerie Mountains, Berlin (2025); *They hover over me* (cur. Arthur Fouray), DOC, Paris (2025); *Si tu te sens frémir, meurs, frappe, avance!* (with text by Lila Torquéo), Galerie A.ROMY, Zurich, CH (2022); *Covered in Feathers*, Mountains, Berlin (2022); *Snow Slime Mud* (cur. Franck Balland), Les Limbes, Saint-Étienne, France (2021); *L'Éclipse* (with text by Lou Ferrand), A.ROMY, Geneva, CH (2020).

Group exhibitions include Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2024); Domaine Pommery, Reims, FR (2022); Galerie Exo Exo, Paris (2022); The Bass, Miami Beach, US (2022); Galerie Sans Titre, Paris (2021); Idealfrühstück, Paris (2021); Galerie High Art, Paris (2020); Galerie Vallois, Paris (2019); Salon de Montrouge, Montrouge, FR (2018); La Tôlerie, Clermont-Ferrand, FR (2018); New Bretagne/Belle Air, Essen, DE (2016); Treize, Paris, FR (2015); Peter Bergman Gallery, Stockholm, SE (2011), Auto Italia, London (2009).

Beyond her individual practice, Coullard plays an active role in the contemporary art scene. In 2015, she co-founded DOC!, an artist-run space and residency in Paris, fostering creative dialogue and collaboration.

Lauren Coullard teaches at MO.CO. Montpellier, FR.

For a detailed CV of the artist, please contact Galerie Mountains.

text

Lauren Coullard, *Uncanny Valley* at Mountains, Berlin
by Lillian Davies

Tectonically, volcanically, mechanically created, mountains soar to peaks, plunging landscapes between into canyons, crevices — valleys. For her third exhibition at Mountains Gallery, French painter Lauren Coullard invites an exploration of an “Uncanny Valley.” Borrowing her title from Japanese roboticist Masahiro Mori, a term he forwarded in the 1970s to describe an increasing unease with robotic forms as they rise to human likeness,

Coullard points to the unsettling encounter with forms constructed to resemble human beings. It's an urgent motif that animates *Frankenstein*, *Blade Runner* and debates on AI, and foregrounds the task of capturing likeness as an assembly of disparate parts. Indeed, science fiction writer Karel Capek built the very word "robot" from various Slovakian, Czech, Polish and Russian words for "chore," "slave," "worker" and "make."

Portrait painting could be said to lie inside an "uncanny valley" in its aim to represent an individual. Coullard's engagement with the genre in fifteen new works on stretched canvases (so much like taught skin!) belies her concern less with mirroring than with shattering the glass in a signal of transformation. In oil, acrylic, pastel, and charcoal, which Coullard speaks of, at times, like beauty products – "sometimes a painting for me is like doing some make-up" – the artist puts a subversive cast of mostly female presenting characters on stage here. She mischievously blacks out bubbles of speech, but the mood remains ebullient. Her subjects' eyes flash towards the viewers,' flick towards their painted companions; the atmosphere is conspiratorial. Onomatopoeia, brilliant color and radiant lines announce spirited play. Won't you join us in this lush meadow for a game?

That quiet extension of the hand embodies Coullard's artistic gesture. A generous request to participate, take hold. In these paintings, hands manifest as prayer hands, mudra hands, hands clasped at the throat to keep a head scarf from billowing away or outstretched to grasp at a fairy sized leaf. Scale varies, and so it should, like a dance partner's twirling away only to be pulled in close again. Young Mary Shelley hand wrote *Frankenstein* on long candle lit nights in The Alps and structured her manuscript around the motif of letter-writing. "A thin hand raised in animation" calls Shelley's narrator to recount his tale. And it is the monster's reach, his body charged with life, that drives young Victor Frankenstein away in horror: "He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped."

Coullard's practice of collage drives these works. Each canvas here develops from the artist's ongoing engagement with the medium. These paintings grow from the hybrid forms she's built in small works on paper with a panoply of visual language plucked from 15th century European painting, sci films, manga and French comic books. Playfully shuffled and rearranged, like a game of cards, Coullard does not make portraits of life, but portraits of our attempts to take it apart and reimagine: remake.

My newly published book, *Collages*, springs from this research. Inspired by conversations with Lauren Coullard as she prepared "Uncanny Valley," *Collages* considers portraits, making, and what it means to play. *Collages* will be launched in Berlin, in early April, at the heart this exhibition.

— Lillian Davies

Art historian, curator and author of multidisciplinary artist mounir fatmi's first monograph (*Suspect Language*, Skira, Flammarion), Lillian Davies writes for Artforum, Flash Art and Interview. Guest lecturer at École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris; Ecole W (Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas); and Parsons Paris, Lillian is Adjunct Professor at Paris College of Art and Sciences Po. Originally from Austin, Texas, Lillian earned a BA in Art History & Comparative Religions from Columbia University, an MA in Curating Contemporary Art from Royal College of Art, and conducted Doctoral research in a Troisième Cycle at the Ecole du Louvre, presenting her work on modern and contemporary art in the Arab and Muslim worlds and their diasporas at conferences hosted by L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Université de Genève and Akademie der Künste der Welt, Cologne. Lillian is a recipient of AICA France's Bourse Ekphrasis.

social media

@lauren_coullard #laurencoullard
@mountains_berlin #mountainsberlin

contacts

info@mountains.gallery

Klaus Voss +49 151 506 586 77
Markus Summerer +49 171 90 13 691

DM @mountains_berlin