

Whitewall

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Loris Gréaud Wonders, Whose Responsibility is it to Invent Reality?

By Katy Donoghue

Loris Gréaud's artistic practice seems to have almost anticipated this moment in time. With museum, gallery, and exhibition spaces temporarily closed; people—including artists—required to stay home in isolation, one has to wonder: what kind of art is now relevant?

The French [artist](#) creates work that straddles fiction and reality, conveying a concept that is as surreal as the way most of our days now feel.

Whitewall caught up with Gréaud, holed up in his impressive studio in a suburb of Paris, to see how he's making sense of our current situation.

WHITEWALL: How are you doing?

LORIS GRÉAUD: I'm good, actually. Confinement is always a great idea when it comes to art and poetry. There is a lot of pain out there, at our doorstep—death, separation, frustration, isolation, and fear. It's a terrible moment for mankind. Paradoxically, it's a great moment to be alive.

WW: What are you listening to, reading, and watching?

LG: There is this COIL album from 1998, released under the name *Time Machines*—John Balance described the project with the potential of real influence: losing track of time. I believe it's the real soundtrack of our days.

WW: Are you able to find the time to create and work in your studio?

LG: For quite a while we had and felt signs, intuitions and rumors of the merging of fiction with reality. It has been an incredible acceleration of the acceleration of it. This moment redefines everything—films, shows, books. Everything has changed in status and/or destination. Some have disappeared...

Now that everything has shifted and almost reversed, what kind of art, what kind of projects are relevant? Poetry will always be the best space of resistance. But with this new configuration, what is the art of tomorrow? What is the status of the studio? Of the artist? Of the agent-artist? All this is a fertile ground for good art, certainly real art. In a world ruled by fiction whose responsibility is it to invent reality?

WW: How are you staying inspired or hopeful?

LG: I'm not very hopeful. My only wish is that all kind of suffering could stop, of course. But when it comes to art and the art world, I believe it will only give amplitude to inequalities—the gap that doesn't allow the right path for great art. Now that the balance between fiction and reality has had a role-reversal, I'm really inspired by the next step and the potential inner migration of mental spaces and landscape onto one continuum.

Reading this J.G. Ballard quote from a 1970 *Penthouse* interview feels more relevant than ever:

"A hundred years ago one has the impression that people had made a clear distinction between the outer world of work and of agriculture, commerce and social relationships — which was real — and the inner world of their own minds, day-dreams and hopes. Fiction on the one hand; reality on the other. This reality which surrounded individuals, the writer's role of inventing a fiction that encapsulated various experiences going on in the real world and dramatizing them in fictional form, worked. Now the whole situation has been reversed. The exterior landscapes of the seventies are almost entirely fictional ones created by advertising, mass merchandising... politics conducted as advertising. It is very difficult for the writer.

Given that external reality is a fiction, the writer's role is almost superfluous. He does not need to invent the fiction because it is already there."