

JOEY RAMONE

Josephstraat 166-168  
3014 TX Rotterdam  
The Netherlands

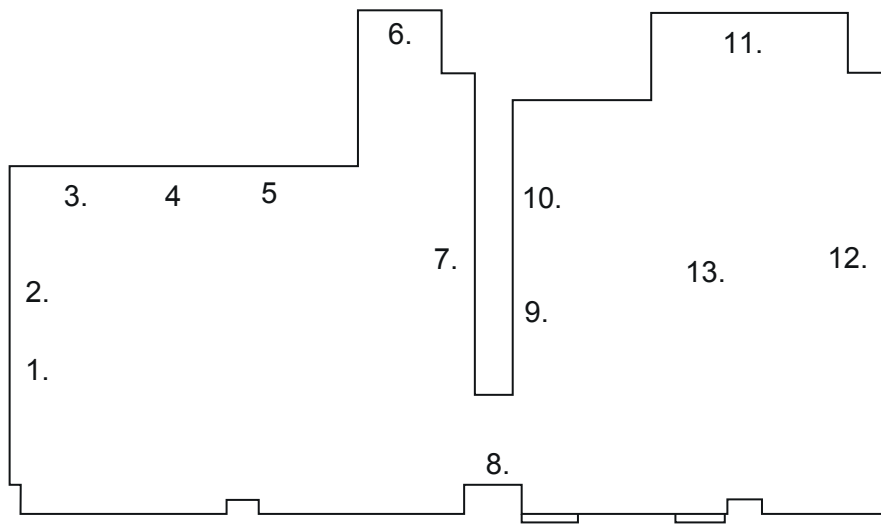
[www.joeyramone.nl](http://www.joeyramone.nl)  
[gallery@joeyramone.nl](mailto:gallery@joeyramone.nl)  
[@joey\\_ramone\\_rotterdam](https://www.instagram.com/joey_ramone_rotterdam)

BERNAT  
DAVIU

There Are  
More Things

09.09 - 04.11.2023

JOEY RAMONE



1. Imaculada Concepción, 2023  
Oil on linen  
73x60cm

2. The good old days, 2023  
Oil on found painting  
100x75cm

3. There Are More Things, 2023  
Oil on found painting  
17x22cm

4. Spears (Las Lanzas), 2023  
Oil on linen  
190x150cm

5. Dutch portrait, 2023  
Oil on found painting  
40x34cm

6. Escapism, 2023  
Oil on linen  
81x65cm

7. Medusa (Romania), 2023  
Oil on found painting  
43x33cm

8. Dutch portrait, 2023  
Oil on linen  
46x38cm

9. Collateral damage, 2023  
Oil on linen  
198x151cm

10. Un fulano de tal, 2020-2023  
Oil on linen  
33x24cm

11. Pears  
Oil on found painting  
33x41cm

12. War Games, 2022  
Oil on linen  
170x200cm

13. Prototype I, 2023  
Oil paint on Kinetic sculpture  
80x25x22cm

Bernat Daviu (1985, Fonteta) studied Fine Arts at Central Saint Martins, London.

His most recent solo exhibitions include Just before the end of painting (MAC, Mataró Art Contemporani, Capella del Cementiri dels Caputxins, Spain 2021) and Waiting Room (Bombon Projects, Barcelona 2021).

Other recent group exhibitions include Intenció Poètica, MACBA (Barcelona 2022-23) Ara Mateix: tot està per fer, Arts Santa Mònica (Barcelona 2020-21) and Painting: a permanent challenge (Caixa Forum, Barcelona 2019-20). His projects and works have also been shown and presented at Fundació Tàpies (Barcelona, 2021), Caixa Forum (Madrid, 2020), Cuchifritos Gallery (New York, 2018), Arts Santa Mònica (Barcelona, 2018), Fundació Arranz- Bravo (L'Hospitalet, 2017), Fundació Joan Miró (Barcelona, 2016), Nau Estruch (Sabadell, 2015), Galeria Balaguer (Barcelona, 2015), Uma certa falta de coherencia (Porto, 2014), Guest Projects (London, 2012), Walker Art Gallery (Liverpool, 2012) or Bienal de Jafre (Jafre, 2009).

Thank you:

Bernat Daviu  
There Are More Things  
09.09 - 04.11.2023

*JOEY RAMONE is proud to open the season with the 1st solo exhibition at the gallery by Barcelona based artist Bernat Daviu (1985, Fonteta). The exhibition entitled There Are More Things opens on Saturday 9 September, 16.00 – 19.00hrs and runs till 4 November 2023.*

A landscape in which the countryside occupies a little more than the lower half of the painting; In the background, the classic blue mountains in the distance, on the lower right a white house with an orange roof with something of a farm or farm building; A mass of trees crosses the canvas from the centre to the right, offsetting the blue of the distant mountain range in the composition. The picture is painted with very limited technical resources. Neither a great hand, nor a great idea, nor a great result. It is almost a picture of a Sunday boy or a school painter without much to tell. However, something strange happens on the canvas: a diagonal line cuts it from top to bottom, crossing the mountain, trees and house and dividing it into two halves, a lighter one on the right and a darker one on the left.

The viewer cannot help but start thinking, trying to understand, to make sense of the phenomenon. There may be a technical explanation, related to the history of the painting: perhaps it was exposed to light on the far left and the pigments have oxidised more on that side, or it was stored with another painting on top of it that protected the half on the right from dirt, or it has even undergone a process of restoration and cleaning that, for now, has only carried out that half that looks lighter and brighter.

But what if the answer is inherent in the painting and intentional and in the painter's hand? The dark part would therefore be a shadow that affects half of the landscape. Similar to when a cloud passes in front of the sun and we see that some areas are still shining in the sun but others are not. Although the straight and clean cut of the dark part makes us think of something physically more radical and the diagonal leads us to read it as something moving towards the right. Then we think of those science fiction films in which the flying saucer makes itself felt on the surface of the earth by its shadow that covers the houses and landscapes little by little in a threatening way; and someone seeing that line of darkness advancing looks up and sees with fear the spaceship in the sky...

But there is still a third possibility: what if what we see is a pictorial representation of something that happens outside the canvas? Let me explain: if what we see painted on the canvas were related to something that occurs outside it. Light or shadow would be the same thing, but they would have their origin beyond the limit of what is painted and yet they are painted.

The dark half would be the shadow of an object that exists (or that existed, the work painted in the past opens an exciting debate about the time we are contemplating) while the lighter half could be an area illuminated by a light source.

Light and shadow are the two fundamentals of painting and are even present in the Greek myth of its invention, but on this occasion they serve Bernat Daviu to go beyond the physical limits of the painting and place it in relation to the spectator while extending what happens in it beyond its own physical limits and extending the narrative to the spectator's experience.

These pieces are based on found paintings, works that already existed, that Daviu buys in flea markets and antique or vintage shops. They are therefore paintings that already had an author, a history and an intention. The memory of these artists has been lost, but we can locate them in a genre of painting that is somewhere between professional and amateur, with very specific references to decorative and classical genres. (Many of these were acquired in Romania, which places them in a social, historical and cultural environment very much determined by the geopolitical changes of the 20th century).

He makes interventions on them in an exercise of appropriation that transforms the initial artist's intention to open it up to new readings that will be completed by the spectator. The subtlety of the shadow allows precisely that. It is its capacity to be everything and nothing at the same time. Like those of the cave, they are not reality and can be interpreted in many ways. It also leads us to question it. The shadow is the reflection of reality and is the proof of something that exists outside what is painted.

Bergson, Deleuze connecting shadow, time, fold and reality...

The spectator doubts the veracity of these interventions: what is real (original) and what is false (added)? It is paradoxical that it is precisely such an intangible element as the shadow that leads us to question what is real in what we are contemplating.

At the same time, the monochrome painting represented a revolution in the history of painting and, like the paintings of academic roots, came to represent a saturation in the taste exhausted by repetition ad infinitum. What was once style becomes boredom and loses its initial value and meaning. It fascinates me that Daviu has found the common ground between the academy and the avant-garde and that this is banalisation. The shadow, once again intangible and ghostly, is yet again the resource he uses to question this official history.

Firstly because of the element of rupture: they are no longer monochrome, no longer abstraction. There is another colour and there are legible and identifiable forms. But above all there is irony applied to an essentially serious and dour sub-genre. And there is doubt: are we looking at a complete work or a fragment of a larger one that, in detail, looks like a monochrome only because most of the canvas that has come down to us is of a single colour? Once again, it is up to the spectator to decide, to narrate and to close the reading of what he or she is contemplating.

To question the artist's intention, to put the spectator in the place of the creator, to let him decide what he is seeing. The gaze completes the work of art and does so in the space that exists beyond it. Moreover, altering the laws of the market.

To modify the notion of the original, to return an altered object to the economic circuit, to set it in motion again. A symbolic but fundamental detail: sometimes it is the shadow of the frame that we find on the canvas. The shadow of a physical element that closes, delimits and encloses the work becomes the element that opens and expands it.

After this, there is only one more step: the inclusion of figurative elements in the painting that change its intentionality and construct a new narrative. An electricity pylon, a caravan of lorries, a Sunday carriage appear in what were once solitary settings typical of Romantic-rooted landscape painting for petit bourgeois consumption. It is as if reality has brought the classical genres up to date. With great irony, again, a trademark of the house, the commonplaces are questioned as if it were possible to update them without creating cracks or lines of rupture. The strangeness of what is happening in the painting. Once again, it will be the spectator who will have to doubt the reality of what he is seeing (reality understood, once again, as the original) and will have to complete the reading with one of the multiple possibilities: is it a present-day painting that uses a language of the past or is it an incorporation into the canvas of what has happened to the original landscape with the arrival of the modern world?

Bernat Daviú (Fonteta, Girona, 1985) trained at Central Saint Martins in London and much of his work revolves around performance and action, involving other actors, the space in which it takes place and the viewer's gaze. In the works in this exhibition, he continues to be interested in the same concerns, even though the pieces are static and made in an apparently classical language and medium. His artistic activity is conceived as a proposal,

a beginning, on which other factors (time, space, spectator) will complete (or rather begin to complete) the work of art.

Joaquín García Martín



**Artist Notes by  
Bernat Daviu**

(References as they appear in the exhibition)

1.

Imaculada Concepció

This painting features the shadow of a plant inspired by a religious painting by Sanchez Cotan depicting the Virgin Mary. The plant is an orchid that probably in the painting appears as a symbol to highlight the purity of Mary. In Cotan's painting there is also a lily, the most iconic symbol connected to Virgin Mary, present in many religious paintings. I chose the orchid because it is less common and its interpretation I believe can be more open. In any case, the idea was to show a plant connected to religious paintings as the historical role of religion in art.

2.

The good old days

I bought this painting at an auction house after it failed to sell. It is a copy of an important work by Joaquim Mir hanging at the MNAC (National Museum of Catalan Art) called Sol i Ombra (Sun and shadow) from 1920. The painting has a few tears on the canvas, but although is not now in its best condition, it was probably at some point hanging with a nice frame at someone's house. My idea was to paint the shadow that an exuberant frame would create on the topside of the painting. It is a way to give some decency to a painting that has lost its attraction and that no one wants anymore.



1.



8.



4.

4.

#### Spears (Las Lanzas)

*Spears* is influenced by one of the most well-known war paintings in the history of art, the *Battle of Breda* by Diego Velazquez. The origin of *Spears* comes from an image that unexpectedly showed up in my studio, the shadow of a set of brushes resting inside a pot of turpentine reminded me of the position of the spears in Velazquez's painting, thus establishing a connection between the brushes and the weapon. The relationship between art and power -in this painting even more precisely about art and war- is very present in the works of this exhibition, as it has been one of the most influential and controversial external factors that has shaped the history of art.

5 & 8.

#### Dutch portrait

The frame in the portrait of Captain Jacob Binkes made by the Dutch artist Nicolas Maes in the 17th century is the protagonist. Binkes is framed by a gilded carving made of weapons and military symbols such as a classic military trophy, a helmet, a set of deployed weapons, naval instruments, a crossed baton, a balloon or a cannon. The shadow that this presumptuous frame creates on the work is what I isolate and apply to two of my paintings. In one of them I have painted the shadow on the top of a monochrome that now frames the void of the minimalist work and invites us to imagine an infinite number of possible portraits including the shadow of the viewer observing the work, which is located in the potential space of the character portrayed. This same shadow is also present in a painting of a cat that I bought in an antique shop in Rotterdam, near the gallery. Both works are titled Dutch portrait.

7.

#### Medusa (Romania)

The origin of *Medusa* is a painting I bought in the south of Romania while I was taking part in an art residency. On top of a painting of roses I painted a fence like the ones you can see in this part of Romania; fences imitating the logos of luxury brands such as Versace or Louis Vuitton. This fetish for luxury brands really caught my attention. I was told this flower painting came from Italy (many other objects of the market are second hand goods from Western Europe). So I was interested in giving this painting another life with an element particular of the context where I was staying.





9.

### Collateral damage

The outer presences are again taking a central stage in the painting. In this case we see the shadow of an Alocasia plant corrupting its pristine monochromatic surface. Paintings often hang in domestic spaces surrounded by plants. As an artist this is something that I can't control. At first it really bothered me, having plants and other elements in front of my work. But with time I have accepted that you can't always control all that happens near your work. I would say that these external factors have probably become the most important aspect of my practice: the idea that nothing exists on its own, everything is in relation to something else. The painting is called Collateral damage, in part because this type of plant can also be poisonous if you eat it.

10.

### Un fulano de tal

Fulano de tal translates as so and so: a person who is disliked or considered to have or is considered to have a particular characteristic, typically an unfavourable one. What we see is the shadow of the Spanish King Philip IV, again taken from a painting by Velazquez. The idea came after showing my work in ARCO Madrid, an art fair in Madrid that is visited by the King of Spain. I was thinking of the connection of art with the monarchy nowadays, which compared to the past is zero. During the King's visit the fair has to be empty of visitors for security reasons, so he becomes a sort of a nuisance. His role is more of someone bothering the public and the artist, preventing them from freely looking at art, rather than contributing to the development of arts.

13.

### War games

Following this same interest, this large blue monochrome painting contains the subtle shadow of a battle formed by little plastic soldiers used to play war games. I have been wondering about the historical role of the artist in the representation of military figures or bloody battles. How did they feel? What was their position? We know that Goya contrasted the representations of the court with the black paintings and that El Greco primarily refused to paint the portrait of evil Spanish Cardinal Fernando Niño de Guevara. This painting feels like making a war painting as if it happened by chance, a temporary moment that happened by accident. It is something that is there, but we don't want to see.