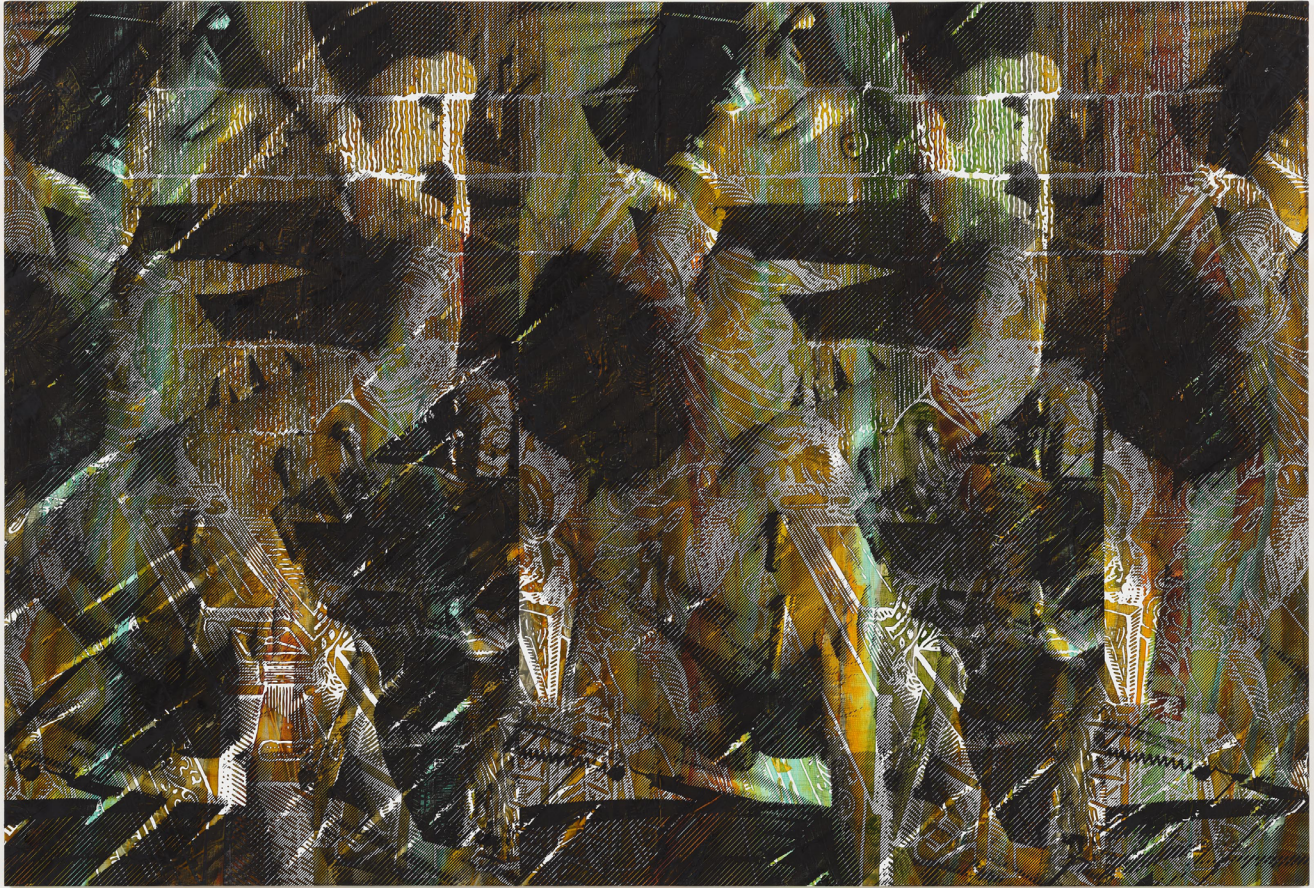


Sights#4  
The Intruder by Alexander Carver







Alexander Carver  
All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace, 2020  
oil on linen, 187 x 277 x 3 cm  
unique

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Alexander Carver's imagery is imbued with the dramas and desires of the human, tracked through an unremittingly tactile focus on the transformative capabilities of the body. Medieval woodcuts displaying all manner of torture and primitive surgical procedures are fused with techno-fetishistic references to surgical robotics, 'screen' space, and design patents. Despite the oppressive overabundance of misery contained within these source materials, the paintings themselves become a fertile ground for the cultivation of aesthetic pleasure and humor.

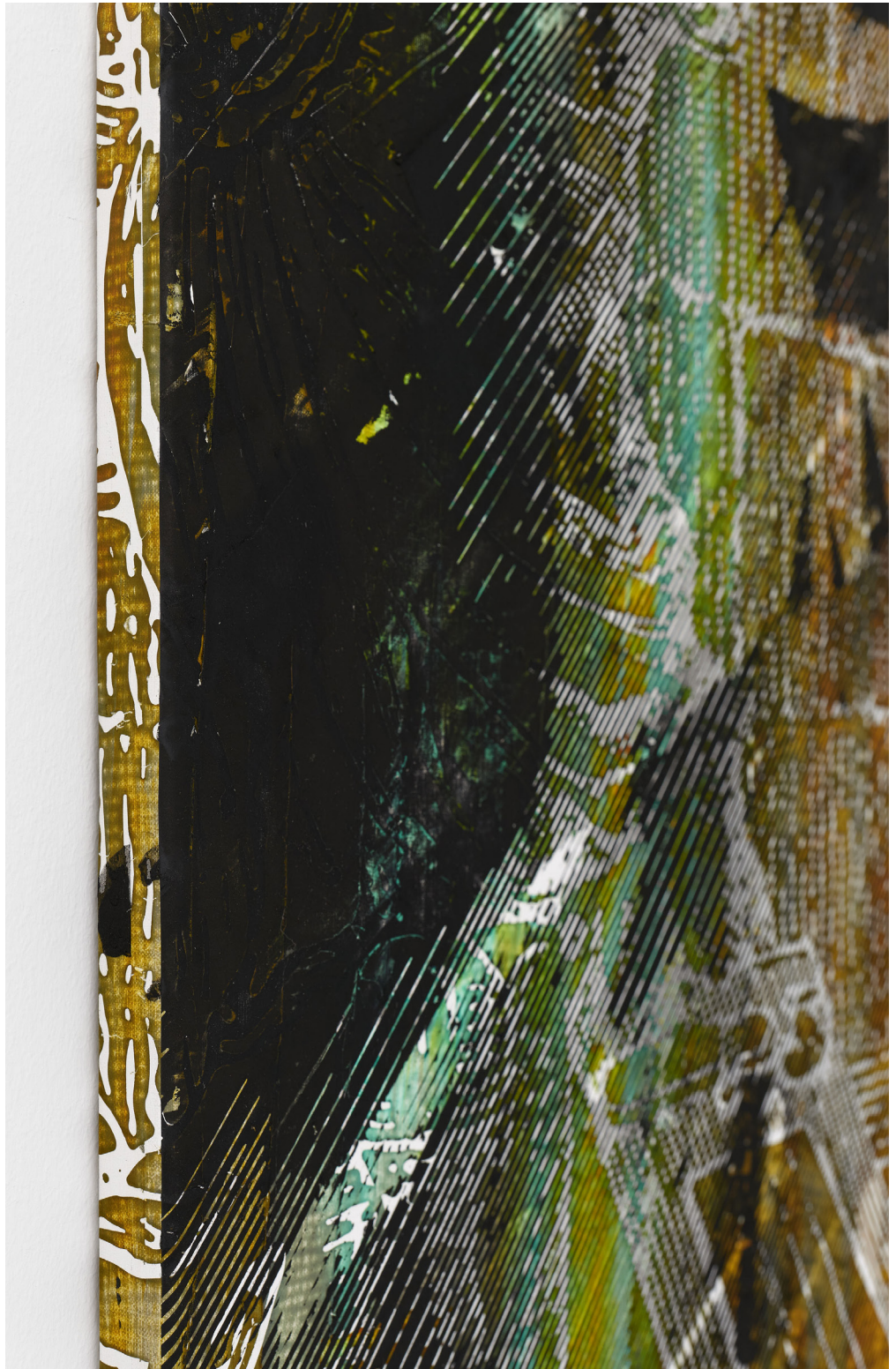
'Painting as a primitive form of cultural technology is perhaps not unlike a phantasmagoria. Largely irrelevant, its illusionism has been revealed to the masses but nevertheless it offers a lure of the uncanny in a form of its Zombie or Cadaver status. This may be an adequate comparison for the medium suspended somewhere between autopsy and undead animism. If the pseudo-problems of painting could be anthropomorphized, would they be symptoms of an ailment?'

– Alexander Carver



Carver's application of techniques such as frottage and silk-screen produces dense, multi-layered compositions. Lines cut both by hand and machine create space within the composition and anchor the form to the picture plane.

The indirect address of the canvas through frottage with oil parallels the contradictions of bodily intervention in modern surgery: indexical but allusive glimpses of creased membranes and woven fabric are rendered in paint on the surface. Drawing on the sophisticated manipulations of perspective in panoramic paintings, Carver creates paintings akin to the immersive depths of the screen.



Alexander Carver  
All Watched Over by  
Machines of Loving  
Grace, 2020 (detail)

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Alexander Carver  
Plant Food: Not A Metaphor XIII, 2020  
oil on linen  
134 x 201 x 3 cm  
unique

USD 21,000.00 (excl. VAT)

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Carver's new body of work focuses on the concept of 'grafting' as it applies broadly to systems of thought which are transposed and sutured together, provisionally. Grafting refers to the techniques of botanical cultivation, and in surgical practice to the harvesting and transplantation of organs, including the epidermis.

In a hermeneutic fashion, 'grafting' also refers to the production of the paintings themselves, whereby both imaginatively and technically the picture plane is constructed from the transplantation and suturing together radically different mark-making strategies. Frottage, for instance, is reliant on the use of objects which are placed behind the canvas and then revealed only through an indexical impression left in paint.





Frottage test strips of of surgical tools (left) and reed (right) by Alexander Carver, 2020





Gaspare Tagliacozzi, *De Curtorum Chirurgia per Insitionem*. Venezia, Roberto Meietti, 1597, tab. VIII. Bologna, Putti's Donation, Rizzoli Orthopaedic Institute.

Methods of mark-making and layering achieve a 'holographic' painting.

Here, the obscured white lines of exposed gesso ground trace the contours of an early Renaissance woodblock depicting an experimental rhinoplasty patient whose nose has been grafted to a skin flap from his arm in order to remedy an injury from a duel or necrosis from syphilis.

Alexander Carver, *The Intruder*, 2020 (detail)



This bizarre procedure was later utilized to reconstruct the mangled faces of soldiers in the twentieth century during the first and second World Wars.

Eclipsing a complete view of the Renaissance figure (embedded within dense frottage of woven material) is an image of a modern surgical tool used for skin-graft harvesting, rendered in thick black lines of oil paint. Within these black lines, two sequential impressions of a crude instrument are discernable. A device containing a simple roller and a handle appears to glide across the surface of the painting.



Alexander Carver  
The Intruder, 2020  
oil on linen  
152 x 178 x 3 cm  
unique





Artist Unknown, Robertson's phantasmagoria, Paris, 1797

Carver's paintings evoke holographic ghost-like impressions, which find their inspiration in the so-called phantasmagoria. Historically, the phantasmagoria was a spectacle theater that revolved around the basic principles of light and projection manipulation.

During the Enlightenment in Europe, a proto cinematic fad of sorts began to spread which involved the conjuring of images of the dead, and the supernatural with simple optical tricks.

Despite knowing that the illusion was conjured by a lantern, smoke, and mirrors people nevertheless reveled in the uncanny quality of seeing recently decapitated kings, bleeding nuns, and supernatural beings appear, if only momentarily, in the smoke of a dark room.

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 IN OUR [ONLINE VIEWING ROOM](#)



Giovanni Fontana, a figure with lantern projecting a winged demon, 1420