

STIJN COLE



Stijn Cole, exhibition view of «1:1 / Marine», C-Mine, Genk (BE), 2017 (photo Karel Moortgat)

Born in 1978 in Ghent (BE)
Lives and works in Chimay (BE)

The relation between the object and its surroundings is central in Stijn Cole's work. Light, not the medium, is crucial here, since the way we experience color and form is to a great extent determined by the intensity of the light they are subjected to. Stijn Cole is constantly bringing this knowledge into play when creating his installations and other works. He always reduces his images to their purest essence. His choice of media is eclectic: there's video as well as sculpture, painting and mixed media, photography, and graphics and besides abstract work, he also creates figurative art. And yet his oeuvre demonstrates great coherence.

In Stijn Cole's universe, themes like time and landscape painting are endowed with a renewed beauty that translates into a contemporary version of impressionism. Each new series of Stijn Cole's works is connected with a specific period, walk, or journey, which gives it an almost documentary quality. Stijn Cole describes his contribution as modest, just a filter he puts on reality. But with the utmost precision and subtlety, he challenges the viewer to take on an active role. In this manipulative game, he entices the viewer to engage in an experience of intensity, space, and shape that will time and time again prove to be surprising. His newest works increasingly take the shape of installations, landscapes created by Stijn Cole that the audience is invited to wander around in.

SHOWS (SELECTED)

- 2021 *Tienda de Memorias*, cur. Nicolás Bourriaud, Casa Wabi, Mexico City (MX)
Endgame, Corsini Botanical Garden, Porto Ercole (IT)
Time and Tide, Ter Posterie, Roeselare (BE)
Van Eyck in Depth. Friction and harmony through the eye of architects and artists, GUM – Gents Universiteitsmuseum (BE)
The intimate consciousness of time, Irène Laub Gallery, Brussels (BE)
- 2020 *Miroirs 3 – De terre et de ciel*, cur. Myriam Louyest and Christophe Veys, Enghien (BE)
POST TENEBRAS SPERO LVCEM, Galeria Hilario Galguera, Mexico City (MX)
La colère de Ludd, BPS22, Charleroi (BE)
- 2019 *Variations sur les mêmes thèmes (with Marthe Wéry)*, BPS22, Charleroi (BE)
Genesis, cur. Christa Vyvey, LAC Narbonne, Sigean (FR)
- 2018 *De zinderen van de zee*, cur. Joanna De Vos, De Mesdag Collectie, Den Haag (NL)
100 year NICC, cur. Guillaume Bijl, NICC, Antwerp (BE)
- 2017 *1:1 / Marine, C-Mine, Genk (BE)*
Vloed, cur. Els Wuyts, Ten Bogaerde, Koksijde (BE)
- 2016 *60 journées d'été '76 '16*, Raveelmuseum, Machelen (BE)
Drawing Front, Kunstvereniging Diepenheim, Diepenheim (NL)
- 2015 *October*, Gallery René Blouin, Montréal (CA)
- 2014 *Capita Selecta*, cur. Monia Warnez, Broelmuseum, Kortrijk (BE)
- 2013 *The Prélude Pathétique*, cur. Wim Lambrecht, University library, Leuven (BE)
Onder de loep, cur. Kristof Reulens, Emile Van Dorenmuseum, Genk (BE)
- 2012 *Von hier bis hier*, Kunstverein Schwerte, Schwerte (DE)
Façades, cur. Patrick Ronsse and Pieter Vermeulen, Be-Part, Waregem (BE)
- 2011 *ZT, Flanders House*, New York (US)
Frans Masereel Revisited, cur. Jan Denys, City museum, Aalst (BE)
- 2010 *Provincial Prize East Flanders*, Caermersklooster, Ghent (BE)
- 2008 *Stijn Cole*, cur. Christophe Dejaegere, Scharpoord, Knokke (BE)
- 2007 *Sur La Route / Een tour van Kunstenaars*, cur. Frank Maes, S.M.A.K., Ghent (BE)

COLLECTIONS

Belgian embassy of Washington (US)
 S.M.A.K – Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent (BE)
 MSK – Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent (BE)
 BPSS22, Charleroi (BE)
 Belfius collection, Brussels (BE)
 Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels (BE)
 Emile Van Doren Museum, Genk (BE)
 Collection of the Flemish Parliament, Brussels (BE)
 Collection of East Flanders, Ghent (BE)



Stijn Cole, exhibition view of «Finistère / Fistera», Haus der kunst St Josef, Solothurn (CH), 2019

- 2006 *Stijn Cole*, cur. Philippe Van Cauteren, KunstVerein, Ahlen (DE)
Picture this! – Stijn Cole, cur. Joost Declercq, Museum Dhondt Dhaenens, Deurle (BE)
- 2003 *Stijn Cole/Hannes Vanseveren/Fien Muller 3*, cur. Luk Lambrecht, CC Strombeek (BE)

Endgame, group show in Corsini Botanical Garden, Porto Ercole (IT), 2020



Stijn Cole, exhibition view of «Endgame», Corsini Botanical Garden, Porto Ercole (IT) 2021

Endgame refers to Samuel Beckett's celebrated one-act play, first performed in 1957, in which an embittered protagonist laments the state of his life -- the would-have-beens and could-have-beens, as he nears his journey's end. The title also serves as a commentary on the intrinsic, layered and complex relationship between man and nature.

In recent years, and highlighted by stay-at-home orders many of us faced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the delicate, cyclical and volatile essence of man's relationship with Earth has become impossible to ignore. As we begin to emerge from quarantine, we are increasingly aware of the positive implications of a slower life; of lesser-travelled skies, quieter roads and cleaner waters.

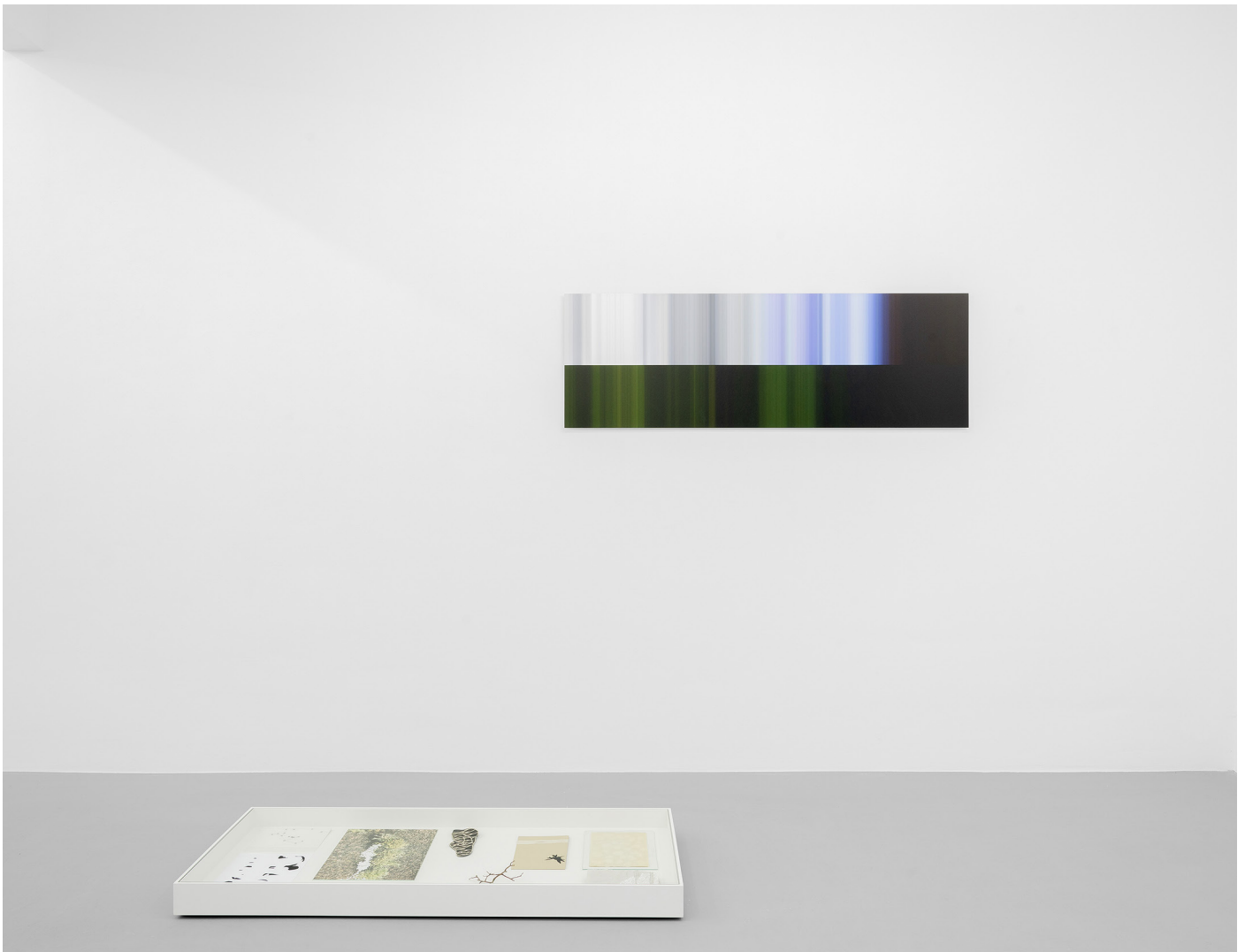
The paradox, as many are, is sad. Us, humans, depend on nature; we feed off it. On the one hand, we nurture and celebrate it, turning to nature for grounding, inspiration or survival. While on the other hand, we take it for granted, destroying it for our gain. As a society, we have reached a junction -- or if we have not yet, we are certainly nearing one: to slow down, and adopt a conscious rhythm, one more attune to that of our Earth, or to keep accelerating, mindlessly, straying further from nature until we are faced with an *Endgame*.

Collaboration is at the heart of this project, with conversations unfolding between man and nature, artist and medium. A cross-cultural dialogue between Esteban Fuentes de Maria, Carlos Garcia, Fernando Ocaña and Bosco Sodi, from Mexico, Agnes, Federica di Carlo, Desideria Corsini, Henryk Corsini, Luia Corsini, Marzia Gandini, Charlie Masson, Pietro Pasolini, Malù dalla Piccola, Benedetto Pietromarchi, Annie Rattie Tristano di Robilant, Baldassare Ruspoli and Alessandro Twombly, from Italy, Stijn Cole from Belgium and Sol Bailey Barker and David Worthington from the United Kingdom, reveals the myriad ways in which man perceives himself in relation to Earth.

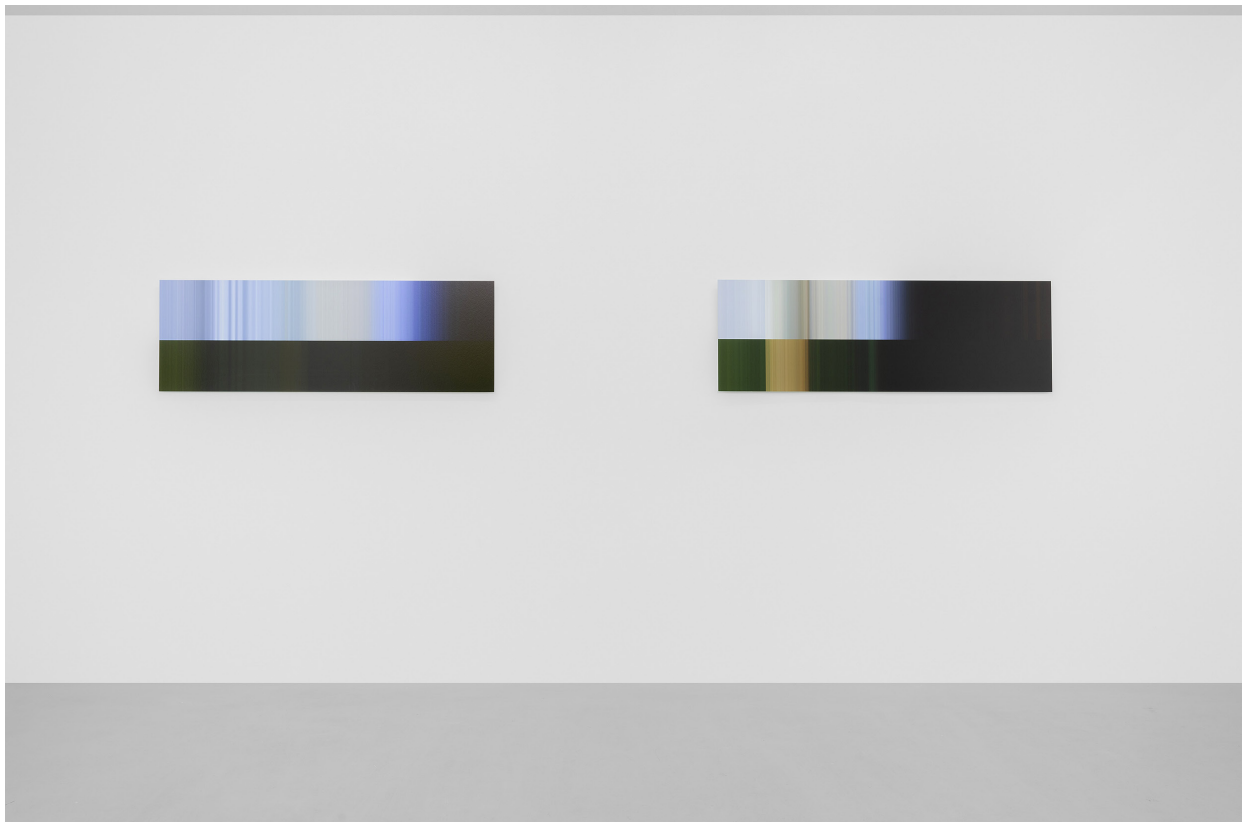
The intimate consciousness of time, group show at Irène Laub Gallery, Brussels (BE), 2021

The intimate consciousness of time brings together six artists whose work is characterized by temporality and who use the notion of time either as an integral part of their creative process or as a perception mechanism.

In the series 60 jours d'été, Stijn Cole captures the changing light of sixty different sunsets. His "timescapes" compress dozens of shots of a fixed point, taken between 7pm and midnight, in an abstract result that is as much a panorama as it is a chronological timeline. The horizon bisects the image – above it, the skies display delicate hues of brilliant blue, wooly grey, deep burgundy or charcoal black. Below it, the earth slowly welcomes the shadows of night. These works, created as a tribute to Marthe Wéry's *Sixty days of work*, use recurrence as a structuring process while retaining an almost lyrical quality, evoking the Impressionist's pursuit of a way to immortalize the fleeting perception of light.



Stijn Cole, exhibition view of «The intimate consciousness of time», Irène Laub Gallery, Brussels (BE), 2021



Stijn Cole, exhibition view of «The intimate consciousness of time», Irène Laub Gallery, Brussels (BE), 2021

Miroirs 3 / De terre et de ciel, group show curated by Myriam Louyest and Christophe Veys in Parc d'Enghien (BE), 2020

Stijn Cole will intervene in the flower garden in a corner where a part of the plantations seems untamed. He will install an angled photograph questioning us on two aspects of nature, a totally wild one like a jungle and a domesticated one like that of a garden. In the Church of Saint Nicolas he will place at eye level two fragments of the same block of marble from an abandoned quarry in our regions. These polished pieces reflect and offer us a look at not only ourselves but also at our regional prestigious past (part of the floor of Versailles comes from Belgian quarries). Stijn Cole is represented by the Wenger Gallery in Zurich.



Stijn Cole, exhibition view at Biennale d'Enghien, Enghien (BE), 2020 (photo by Candice Athenais)

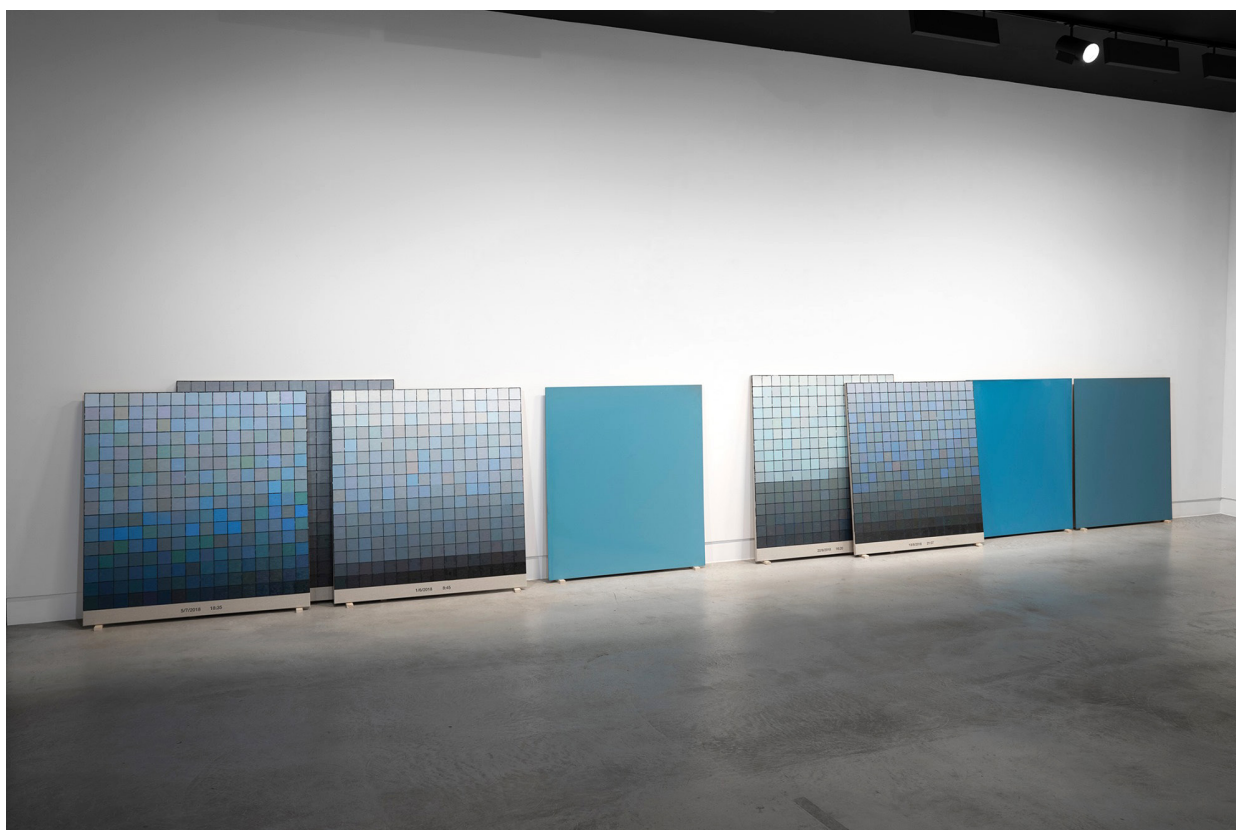




Stijn Cole, exhibition view of «Variations sur les mêmes thèmes» (WiWth Marthe Wéry) at BPS22, Charleroi (BE), 2019

Variation sur les mêmes thèmes (with Marthe Wéry), duo show at BPS22, Charleroi (BE), 2019

Stijn Cole (Ghent, 1978) has been living in the region of Chimay for several years now. He is involved in a multidisciplinary work (painting, photo, drawing, sculpture) which draws on his origins in the history of art. For his exhibition at the BPS22, he chose to start out from the Calais series, a collection of 21 paintings by Marthe Wéry belonging to BPS22. Cole went back to the beach of Calais and, like Wéry, took a series of photos facing the sea with its numerous suggestions of monochromes (the blue of the sky blends with the grey of the sea). He went on to make different paintings which methodologically decompose the chromatic spectrum. A delicate exercise, between intellectual precision and practical sensitivity, in the style of Marthe Wéry.



Stijn Cole, exhibition view of «Variations sur les mêmes thèmes» (WiWth Marthe Wéry) at BPS22, Charleroi (BE), 2019

“October” Project, 2015

Stijn Cole’s interest in light first took form in 2003 when he participated in a workshop beginning at daybreak in the vicinity of Ghent. His first attempt to capture time consisted in fixing the entire day’s light on a roll of sensitized paper. He has since developed a practice whereby he goes on excursions into nature and takes photographs of a particular landscape several times a day or over a longer period, ultimately composing a travel diary of sorts.

The process Cole uses to make his “Colorscapes” is rigorous. After taking several shots of a spot, which requires him to stay outdoors for long stretches of time, he transfers the images to a computer program that ranges them into colour cubes from light to dark. He then prints the digitized files. Cole applies paint over the paper prints, some of which will become paintings on linen. Far from being minimalistic, his pictorial and tactile work reveals both his gesture and the mood of a particular place.

His “Timescapes” are comprised of photographs of a same landscape, taken once a minute and treated in a linear fashion to create a spatiotemporal portrait in which each vertical line represents the atmospheric light of a single minute. The landscape’s characteristic horizon present in all his works makes possible a perspective view of the colours.

Drawings are a third component of Stijn Cole’s project. Often large sized, his drawings can be the result of an observation of nature, for example Branitz Park in Germany for *2 steps aside* (2013), or they can reproduce a well-known work of art—in some cases eliminating cultural details, in others remaking the work in its entirety, as is the case with *De Watzmann* (2010) in which Caspar David Friedrich’s famous painting is sublimated into two works: a pencil drawing and a painting whose original colours have received the Colorscape treatment. The drawings, which highlight the artist’s role as an observer and similarly engage us, are labour-intensive.

In addition to Stijn Cole’s interest in light and landscape, the presence in his work of both figuration and abstraction deserves to be mentioned. In fact, the artist draws from a figurative form— an old painting or photograph of a place—the elements of an abstract work whose final rendering, after being submitted to various contemporary technical processes, still evokes nature. As Cole himself has stated, what he is trying to extract, or abstract, is essence—the essence of light, time and landscape.

- Colette Tougas, Montréal, 2015



Stijn Cole, exhibition view of «Sunset/Sunset» at MSK - Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent (BE), 2010 (photo Kristien Dam)

Sunset/Sunset, Residency Project at MSK – Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent (BE), 201

For his project 'Sunset/Sunset', Stijn Cole was inspired by the museum collection. He is the fourth 'Artist in Residence' at the MSK in Ghent. It is becoming a tradition: during the summer the Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent invites a contemporary artist to shed a different light on the museum's collection. As its fourth 'Artist in Residence', MSK chose Stijn Cole from Ghent.

Cole integrated two new courses in the museum, both of which start from the central exhibition hall. In the first track, Cole examines the landscape in a purely conceptual way. For example, in the Hemicyclus room, he mathematizes a sunset in ten steps.

Each work of "10 shades on/of blue & green, sunset" (2010) consists of a plane "blue key" and "green key," shades used in film and television studios. The straight line separating the two planes represents the horizon. By darkening the shades 11 percent on each work, Cole evokes a sunset.



Stijn Cole, exhibition view of «Sunset/Sunset» at MSK - Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent (BE), 2010 (photo Kristien Dam)



Stijn Cole, exhibition view of «Sunset/Sunset» at MSK - Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent (BE), 2010 (photo Kristien Dam)

Abstracted sunset

The second cycle begins with the pair «Looking Through» (2010), two identical black works. In the following rooms Cole starts from a concrete landscape. Like several landscapes from the museum collection, which he complements with his light box 'Sky blue/Sunset Orange' (2010). Or like the painting 'Setting sun in June' by Emile Claus, on which he was inspired for his series 'Timescapes 7>13June' (2010).

For the largest work in this cycle, Cole went to the De Bourgoyen nature reserve in Ghent. He not only filmed the sunset there, but also took a photograph every fifteen minutes. From these photos, a computer program extracted the 256 most common colors, which were then transferred to paint. Cole used it to create a series of pixel-like paintings. Through the changing color pattern you can experience the sunset in abstracted form. On the screen, which is located between the works in the Lambeaux Gallery, you can see the video images of the time span between the two paintings. The passing of time and the changing light are thus at the heart of his whole body of work.



Stijn Cole, exhibition view of "Cancale 1:1" at Ten bogaerde, Koksijde (BE), 2017

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