

# ARTFORUM

SPOTLIGHT

**Rémy Jacquier**

***Artifices***

Ceysson & Bénétière



View of “Rémy Jacquier: *Artifices*,” 2020. Courtesy the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière.

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The “*Artifices*” series—thirty charcoal and pigment drawings—represents the last two

years of patient work by Rémy Jacquier and reconfigures Ceysson & Bénétière's Saint-Étienne exhibition space.

The gallery space has undergone architectural remodeling for the occasion, split in two by a large diagonal picture rail. This is covered with three rows of drawings to form a seamless panorama that exceeds the viewer's visual field, paralleling the poetic protocol of the series (the artist produced as many drawings as were necessary to entirely cover the back wall of his studio).

With limited material (a few grams of brightly-colored or calcinated pigment powder) and means (hand work and no graphic tools), Jacquier nonetheless dazzles the viewer with smoke and powder—or “works of fireworks,” in his words. Iconic illusions shine through chiaroscuro effects, imbued with the fascinating power of imaginary pyrotechnic shows.

These fireworks, hesitantly drawn, stumble in the depths of a dark surface—a charcoal background that covers the vividly colored skin of paper already rubbed with pigment. It bears the traces of the artist's fingers, puncturing the weave of charcoal and exposing sparks of underlying variations of color. Thus layered, the drawings acquire an ambiguous quality. This excavation of color, muted by a dark veil, also brings to mind Jacquier's earlier series, “Phosphènes” (2011). For “Artifices,” Jacquier has hand-drawn fires burning in the distance, unevenly piercing the smoke screen in gleaming volutes; pastel precipitations; phosphorescent trails; mute eruptions; flickering blazes... Like fireflies, tiny white dots glimmer: stars that reveal the skin of the paper carved with drypoint.

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