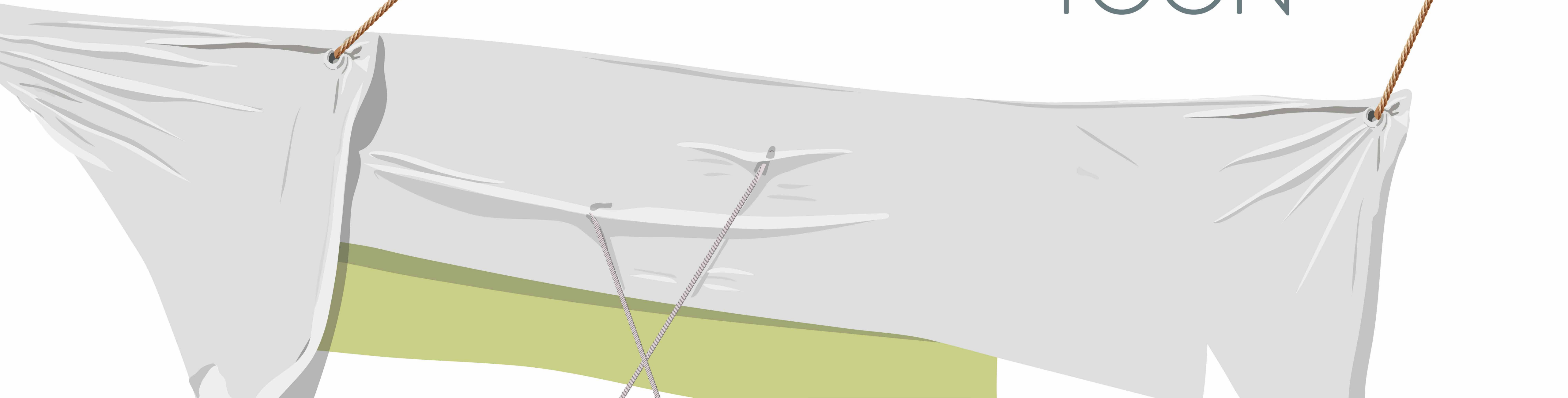


VINCENT SERBIN


The Caricaturing Of Painting **TOON**





TOON

The Caricaturing Of Painting



Painting is a heterogeneous set of very diverse, yet converging traditions, where narrative, figuration, abstraction, realism, immateriality, anti-painting, gestures and an endless number of aspects that summarize the experience of a culture of visuality and representation coexist in parallel."

Santiago B. Olmo:
The Renovation of Painting, without Paint

VINCENT SERBIN

Painting as an ancient, in fact very ancient, major expression of the arts gradually lost its place of preeminence to the point where it became just another method among the many that inhabit the contexts of contemporary art. The decline or weakening of its position consequently gave place to the questioning of paintings as paintings, of the possibilities of its meaning, of its limits and of its adaptation to the present times.

The painting of these times, of our time, are already far-removed from the modern postulates theorists such as Clement Greenberg posed at the end of the 1950s. He argued the artistic progress of painting directed towards its purity, towards its flatness, in the core of a secularized culture where

(...) every art form has the obligation to define its precise limits in a spirit of self-criticism, justifying its existence by marking out those areas of competence not shared by any other practice. For painting, these lay in its articulation of surface and two-dimensional shape and in a consequent refusal of a sculptural or (still worse) literary violations of the manifest integrity of the picture plane.¹

Bound to its modern norms and specificities, painting met the exhaustion of its models, without any apparent possibility of escape. This situation led to the conscious approach and distancing of formalist postulates for the purpose of bringing forth the complete fracture of its self-referentiality, along with the enervation of the pictorial in which elements from dissimilar places of meaning infiltrate.

¹ Crow, Thomas: *The Rise of the Sixties: American and European Art in the Era of Dissent*, Laurence King Publishing, 1996, p. 60



This is where "The discursive nature of painting is useful from the point of view of persuasion as it constitutes a network of representations that is never concluded. It often shares the ironic character that any conscious effort today possesses (...)"² The artist's work achieved through suitable knowledge on how to generate the controversies that give way to eclectic pictorial representations. The paintings are full of displacements and caustic overlaps with which paintings of tactile and sensual character are made and spread out on impure surfaces. Beyond this, from its physicality emerges the approach of a suggested literality which develops between the tangible nature of the object and the intangible narrative that mobilizes in the subjective space in which it operates.

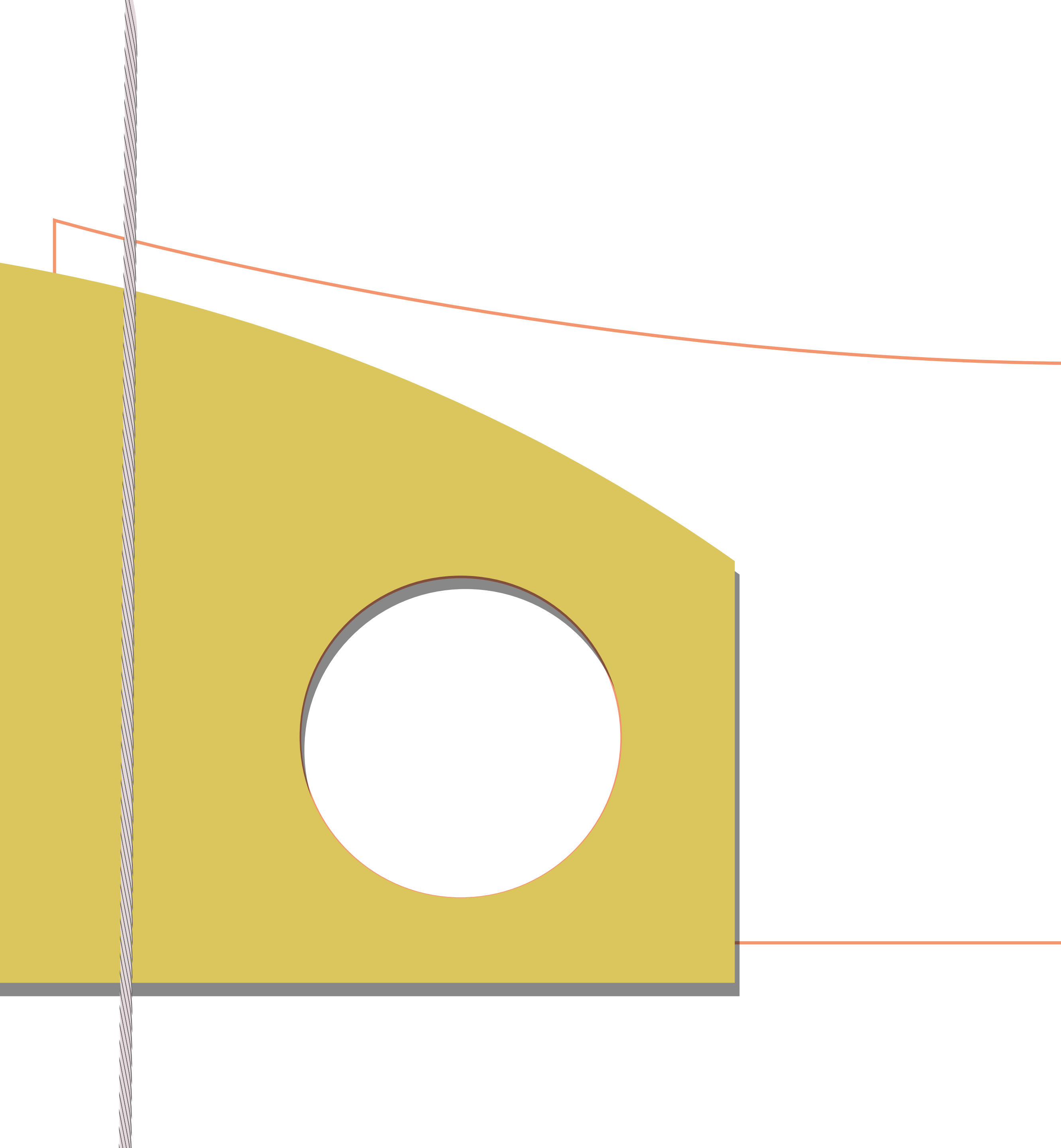
Animated (2020), artist Vincent Serbin's latest series (1951-), arises from this approach concerning the tangible and the intangible of the pictorial fact. He maneuvers through this approach with the irony that is offered by the dismantling of the recurrent formalist elements in painting combined with the adoption of an external significance established in the use of the word "toon". With this term, he reignites the understanding of satire and sarcasm found within it as an embodiment of the absurd, unease and abrupt. These are signifying means with which the artist desacralizes the established means of purity and flatness. Serbin starts from the whim of the "toon" with which he develops, as the artist himself

affirms, his exploration of hybrid, eclectic painting, in terms of his aspiration to be an ambiguously autonomous and equivocal object. For this aspiration, he requires aggregates from other origins to generate its meaning and materialization. Animated is presented to us as the caricaturizing of pictorial purity activated within the redefinition permitted by the conceptual and physical means with which the artist develops his series.

Each "toon" of the series emphasizes irony in its titles: Political Toon, Virtuous Toon, Easter Toon, Lavender Toon, Virginal Toon, Shadowy Toon, Froggy Toon. None of these feign inventing a style nor an individual, autonomous discursivity. Rather, they accentuate the dual sense given by the uneasiness of painting in its enervation. These "toons" are formulated in the deconstruction of a space of unlikely significance, wedged between the pictorial purity and the sarcasm of the absurd which comes from the resource of the animated as a referent of the caricature of the limits marked by painting.

The objective in Animated is to be a dialectic instrument between seemingly opposed modes of thought, the "toon" and the alteration of pictorial purity. The artist executes this action in the overlapping of various media combined with the disruption of the format which make a joke out of the modern Greenbergian reference that precedes it.

² Lawson, Thomas: "Last Exit: Painting", in: *Art after Modernism, Rethinking Representation*, Brian Wallis (ed.), Madrid, Akal/Arte contemporáneo, 2001, p.164.



Serbin's "toons" are the expression of a redefined abstraction, achieved from the open combination of significant elements and existing materials. With these elements, he generates the ambiguity and hybridization of the series regarding the suggestive and sensual elements. This is seen by caricaturing the opening of the pictorial in its formal exhaustion, in the web of interactions and underlying affinities, between the painted image and the artist's desire as an inquirer of the conventional.

Elizabeth Marín Hernández, PHD
Translation by: Victoria Martinez Adalid



Vincent Serbin

Virginal Toon from Animated series, 2020

Matt oil and enamel on canvas over wood panel

32 x 27 inches

81.3 x 68.6 cm

Vincent Serbin

Easter Toon from Animated series, 2020
Oil and enamel on canvas over wood panel.
Shroud-matt oil on canvas with attached
grommets and polypropylene rope.
67 x 53 inches
170.2 x 134.6 cm



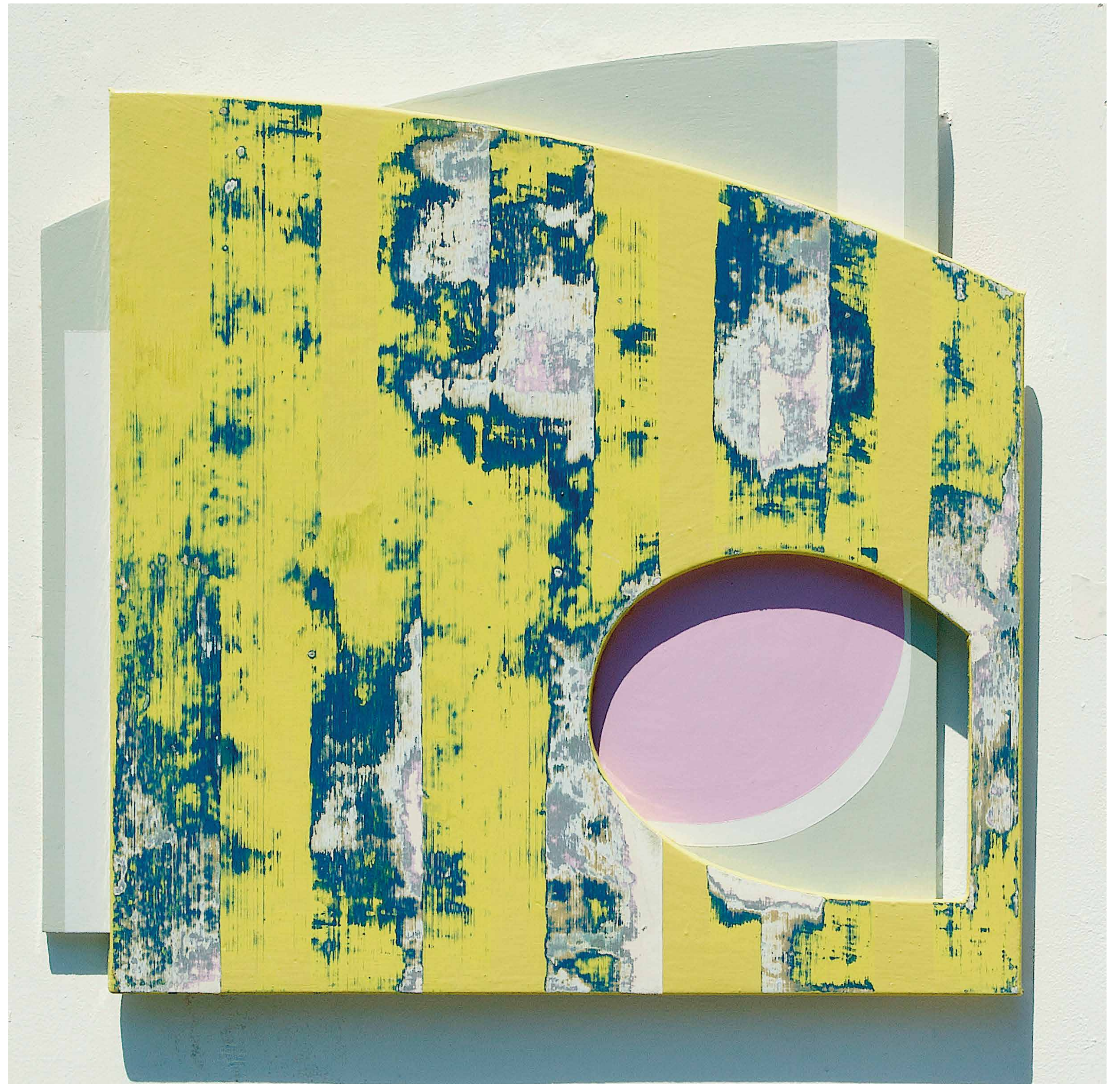


Vincent Serbin

Lavender Toon from Animated series, 2020
Oil and enamel on canvas over wood panel.
Shroud - matt oil on canvas with attached coir rope.
24 x 36 inches
61 x 91.4 cm

Vincent Serbin

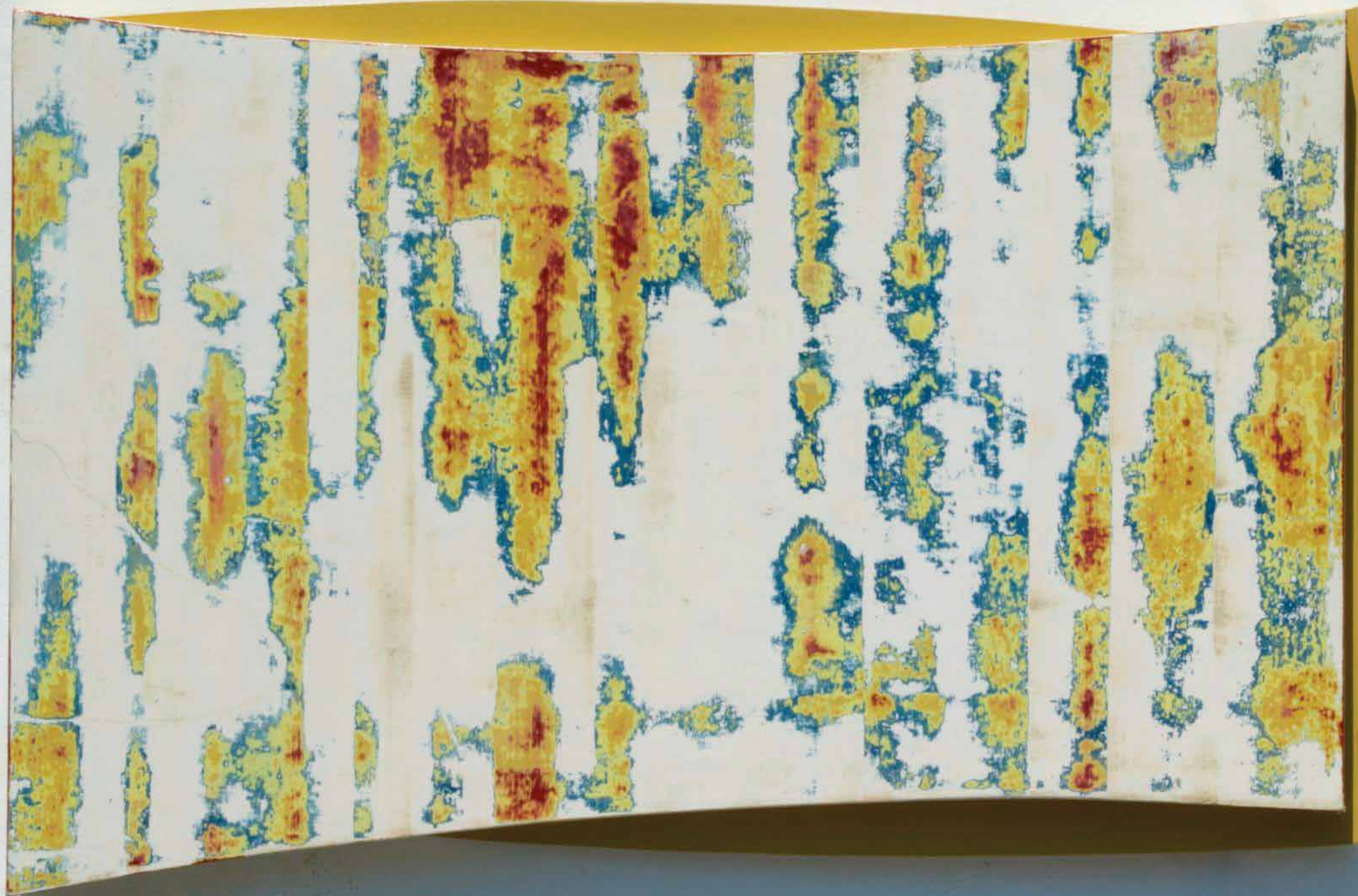
Virtuous Toon from Animated series, 2020
Matt oil and enamel on canvas over wood panel
25 ½ x 26 ½ inches
64.8 x 67.3 cm



Vincent Serbin



Political Toon from Animated series, 2020
Enamel on steel over wood panel.
Shroud - matt oil on canvas with attached
polypropylene rope.
24 x 36 inches
61 x 91.4 cm



Vincent Serbin

Shadowy Toon from Animated series, 2020
Oil and enamel on canvas over wood panel
and MDF.
24 x 36 inches
61 x 91.4 cm

Vincent Serbin

Froggy Toon, 2020
Matt oil and enamel on canvas and wood.
34 x 26 inches
86.4 x 66 cm



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