

# Press Release

**Antoine and Yan Le Clézio**  
are inaugurating their gallery

On **Thursday, November 14, 2024 à 6pm**

**157, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré** 75008 Paris  
in the presence of the artists

## BEING-THERE

Exhibition inspired by the philosophical  
reflections of **Martin Heidegger**

with  
Kari **Vehosalo**, Jaan **Toomik**,  
Hanna **Råst**, Elsa **Salonen**

November 14, 2024 > January 25, 2025



Kari Vehosalo, *The Past is a Gaping Hole III*, 2023  
oil on copper, 18 x 15 cm.  
© Erno Enkenberg © Kari Vehosalo © Le Clézio Gallery

**Le Clézio**

**PRESS CONTACT** | Julie TOURNIER  
jtournier@communicart.fr  
+ 33 (0) 6 51 54 85 74



# Being-There

Driven by the desire to explore human existence, seeking to rediscover the essential in an age oversaturated with information where each moment seems erased by the next, Le Clézio Gallery is pleased to present "Being-There": its inaugural exhibition featuring the works of Kari Vehosalo, Jaan Toomik, Hanna Råst and Elsa Salonen.

*"Wait with great humility and patience for the hour of new clarity; that alone is to live the artist's life, in understanding and creation."*  
— Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet* (1929)

Humans, always oriented toward the future, inevitably confront the reality of their finitude. This tension between infinite aspiration and the limits of life often creates a sense of impatience. For the philosopher Martin Heidegger, the key lies in fully accepting our ephemeral nature, in "Being-There" (Dasein) — either by living authentically, embracing our impermanence, or inauthentically, by fleeing from this reality.



Elsa Salonen, *Delphinium Spell (Deep Cyan, Winged Yellow)*, 2024  
decoloured delphiniums and their extracted colour pigments, isomalt, glass, metal, 100 x 30 cm.  
© Elsa Salonen © Le Clézio Gallery

For Kari Vehosalo, "Being-There" means perceiving reality and truth differently, shaped by our desires, culture, and unconscious mind. In front of vast landscapes and interior scenes marked by gaping black holes, his almost photographic paintings immerse our gaze in mystery, uncertainty, and fragility.

For Jaan Toomik, "Being-There" involves assessing the depth and authenticity of human emotions, both intimate and collective, as they navigate spaces of struggle, memory, and redemption. His multidisciplinary works (painting, performance, sculpture, video, film, and documentary), sometimes as expressive as those of the Viennese Actionists, sometimes meditative and repetitive, draw on both autobiography and strange, alternative experiences of existence.



Jaan Toomik, *Praying for a friend*, 2023  
acrylic on canvas, 198 x 140 cm.  
© Jaan Toomik © Stanislav Stepaško  
© Le Clézio Gallery

For Hanna Råst, "Being-There" is about exploring the role of the archive through history, time, archaeology, memory, and identity. Inspired by the concept of punctum developed by French literary critic and semiologist Roland Barthes, the artist uses photography and video to create "pseudo-archives" temporal illusions that reveal subtle and striking fragments, revisiting the past from a dynamic perspective where time becomes a complex fabric of multiple experiences.

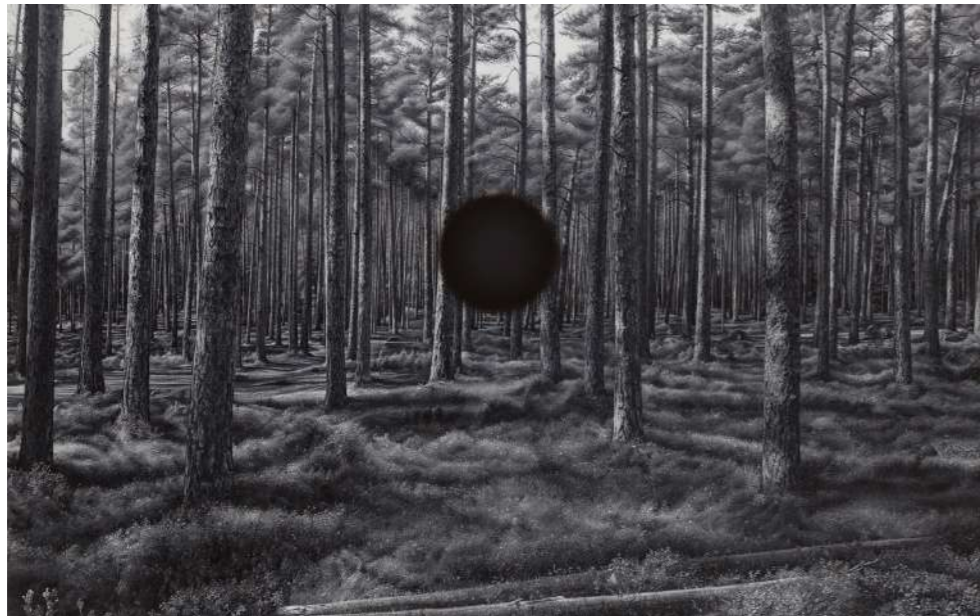
For Elsa Salonen, "Being-There" is about resonating in a cosmic, animistic, and alchemical flow in which matter perpetually transforms. By extracting the essence of everything through continuous distillation to produce colored pigments, the artist seeks to prove, with both science and poetry, the existence of a vital energy and to show how everything around us is timelessly interconnected with the self and the universe.

# Artists

## Kari Vehosalo

Kari Vehosalo explores power, its essence and structures, and how the social contract, even unconsciously, shapes and restricts our way of being. He views the compositions in his paintings as arenas of interaction between fields of force, allowing him to engage with concepts fundamental to humanity, such as death, beauty, sexuality, and power. His paintings reflect postmodern ideology—ironic and playful, with beauty, horror, and absurdity closely intertwined. Despite these postmodern elements, his work is grounded in humanist tradition, expressing a genuine interest in humanity: art is transient, life is short.

Kari Vehosalo (b. 1982) has exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including at Turku Art Museum, Rovaniemi Art Museum, Haus am Lützowplatz in Berlin, Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma in Helsinki, and Amos Anderson Art Museum in Helsinki. An extensive mid-career retrospective was shown at the Sara Hildén Art Museum in Tampere in 2021. In addition to private collections, he has work in several notable public collections, including Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki Art Museum, Saastamoinen Foundation, Wihuri Foundation, and the Henna and Pertti Niemistö Foundation collection. Vehosalo was awarded the Ars Fennica prize in 2017.



Kari Vehosalo, *Object*, 2023  
oil on canvas, 120 x 180 cm.  
© Erno Enkenberg © Kari Vehosalo © Le Clézio Gallery

## Jaan Toomik

Jaan Toomik (b. 1961) is an acknowledged Estonian painter, video and performance artist. Having started out as a painting student in the late 1980s, his practice shifted towards installation and performance art after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the last decade, Toomik has become increasingly involved in film, writing and directing a short film “Oleg” (2010) and a feature film “Landscape with Many Moons” (2014).

Jaan Toomik gained international recognition in the 1990s primarily for his video works. His works like “Way To Sao Paulo” (1994) shown at the Sao Paulo biennial that year, and “Dancing Home” first screened in Helsinki at ARS '95, laid the foundations of Toomik's practice which proceeded to trace and transcend both geographical and autobiographical borders. The artist's most successful and well known work “Father and Son” (1998) portrayed the artist skiing naked on the frozen Baltic sea to the soundtrack of his then 10-year-old son's religious choir singing. The video belongs to several private

and museum collections, including Estonian Art Museum, Tallinn; Erika Hoffmann collection, Berlin; Stedelijk museum, Amsterdam; Moderna Museet; Stockholm; Ludwig museum, Budapest. Toomik's artworks are represented in prominent contemporary art collections such as Louis Vuitton Foundation, Trussardi Foundation, V-A-C and many others.

Jaan Toomik has exhibited widely, both at home and abroad, where he has participated in the first Manifesta (1996), 4<sup>th</sup> Berlin Contemporary Art Biennial (2006) and represented Estonia at the Venice Biennial twice, in 1997 and 2003. His recent solo exhibitions and screenings include “Decoding the Landscape”, KUMU Art Museum, Tallinn (2023); “Forest Turn”, Temnikova & Kasela Gallery, Tallinn (2023); “People and Other Creatures”, Artra Gallery, Milan (2022); “My End is My Beginning. And My Beginning is My End”, Moscow Museum of Modern Art; “A Theatre of Gestures”, curated by Andris Brinkmanis, The Mukusala Art Salon, Riga (2018); “How the West Was Left”, curated by Anders Kreuger, Central Market, Tallinn (2017); Film and video retrospective,

63<sup>rd</sup> International Short Film Festival Oberhausen (2017); “First Slumber”, Tallinn Art Hall Gallery (2016); “Smells Like Old Men's Spirit”, Temnikova & Kasela, Tallinn (2015); 84 HRZ Gallery, Munich; Werkstattgalerie, Berlin (2014); Galleri Sult / Skur 6, Stavanger; Orton Gallery, Helsinki (2013); ARTRA Gallery, Milano; Pop/off art Gallery, Moscow (2012).



Jaan Toomik, *Waterfall*, 2005  
film, 40 s. éd. 4/5.  
© Jaan Toomik © Le Clézio Gallery

## Hanna Råst

Hanna Råst (b. in 1986) is a visual artist working with lens-based media, text, and sculpture. Her work delves into themes of memory, trauma, and storytelling. Currently, she addresses these topics through the lens of ruins, affect, and compassion. Her works are often inspired by various archives, including photographs, historical places or narratives, and found objects.

Through these archives, Hanna Råst reflects on the impact of the past on the present and future. In recent years, her creative process has also blended artistic methods with research, with a particular interest in archaeology, history, and psychology. Additionally, absence and the invisible play an essential role in her work. By omitting certain elements, she invites viewers to fill these gaps with their own imagination.

Her recent projects also include performative and participatory elements, encouraging the audience to approach memory in a tangible and haptic way.



Hanna Råst, *Weight of Memory*, 2022  
stack of family photos in bronze, 10 x 15 x 10 cm, weight 7 kg.  
© Hanna Råst © Le Clézio Gallery

## Elsa Salonen

Elsa Salonen prepares the pigments for her works by grinding a wide variety of raw materials, such as meteorites and seashells, as well as by extracting colours from plants and algae. She views the pigments as collaborators whose 'experiences' define the conceptual message of each work. For example, she has used stones which are millions of years old as pigments, to depict the lost landscapes of the Carboniferous Period (*Stories Told by Stones*, 2018), and burned fox bones to paint a herbarium that reflects on the circle of life (*Eighty Modest Statements About the Impossibility of Death*, 2013). She gathered many of the materials herself at natural sites around the world, where the more unique materials are collected with the help of specialists.

In addition, Elsa Salonen distills colours from flowers, leaving them pale and colourless. The extracted colour pigments she preserves in various ways and displays them alongside the white flowers. The technique is based on

a notion that most organisms, both in the plant and the animal world, seem to lose their colours in death – flowers wither and bodies blanch. Thus, all the colours in nature signal the presence of life energy. The result in her three-dimensional paintings is a poetic separation of the vivid life energy (the preserved colours) from their empty, pale bodies (the decoloured flowers), such as in *Study of Eternal Cycle* (2014) and *Flower Painting, the Act of Immortalising* (2017). Elsa Salonen's practice draws on the traditions of painting, installation, and conceptual art. The works are marked by the influences of science, animism, and alchemy.

Elsa Salonen (b.1984 Turku, Finland) graduated from the Fine Arts Academy of Bologna in 2008 and has been based in Berlin over the past decade. Salonen has exhibited widely in solo and group exhibitions with institutions including, KINDL Centre For Contemporary Art, Kunstverein Wiesbaden and Schwartzsche Villa in Germany; Art Sonje Center in South Korea; Kunsthal Aarhus and Kunsthal Viborg in Denmark and Miguel Urrutia Art Museum in Colombia. Awards

have been received from Artist Grant Finland, Art Promotion Centre Finland, Finnish Cultural Foundation and National Art Award, Italy and her work is held in international private and public collections, including Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art and Saastamoinen Foundation in Finland and Lissone Museum of Contemporary Art in Italy.



Elsa Salonen, *We Are All Made of Stardust (Cygnus)*, 2017  
iron and stone meteorite dust on glass, metal shelf, 100 x 150 cm.  
© Elsa Salonen © Le Clézio Gallery

# Founders

Le Clézio Gallery, founded in 2023, embodies a strong commitment to art and intercultural dialogue.

The gallery is dedicated to promoting all artistic voices, regardless of medium or origin, celebrating the richness and diversity of contemporary creations.

Antoine and Yan Le Clézio, with diverse backgrounds and a shared passion for cultural diversity, are the driving forces behind this initiative.

Antoine, originally from Brittany, holds a research master's degree in medieval art and a professional master's degree in contemporary art. His experience as a gallery manager in Saint-Germain-des-Prés allowed him to explore the variety of artistic creations on the European and Asian markets, while cultivating a valuable network in the art world.

Originally from China, Yan moved to France at the age of 19. In 2015, she founded her own translation and interpretation studio, collaborating with prominent political figures, including former French presidents Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande. In 2020, she co-founded an art curatorial company with a partner based in Dubai, organizing exhibitions in partnership with museums in France, South Korea, and China, thus celebrating the richness of cultural exchanges.



Yan and Antoine Le Clézio  
© Laurence.M © Le Clézio Gallery

# Le Clézio

Attuned to the concepts of essence, cultural heritage and transmission, collective and personal memory, existence, transculturality, temporality and spatiality, as well as commitment, Le Clézio Gallery is dedicated to promoting contemporary artists from diverse backgrounds around these seven pillars

The gallery highlights both emerging talents and established artists, often underrecognized or previously unseen in France, with the aim of bringing them visibility on both the French and international art scenes.

To foster dialogue among diverse audiences and share the profound reflection and creativity of its artists, Le Clézio Gallery offers a rich and varied program of gallery exhibitions, fair presentations, and off-site projects.

This program is further enriched by interdisciplinary events combining live arts, talks, book signings, and children's workshops, fostering a continuous exchange between art and society.

1. **Essence:** (Re)define what truly matters in a world saturated with information.

2. **Cultural Heritage & Transmission:** Connect our cultural roots with contemporary evolutions to create a dynamic and adaptable identity.

3. **Collective & Personal Memory:** Embed individual stories within the social fabric to strengthen collective identity and human connections.

4. **Existence:** Embrace our finitude to better appreciate authentic living.

5. **Transculturality:** Explore the richness of cultural interactions to foster empathy and mutual understanding.

6. **Temporality & Spatiality:** Explore our physical and spiritual experience, despite its limits, to bring meaning to our existence.

7. **Commitment:** Convey impactful messages to inspire meaningful actions and lasting change.

# Practical Information

**Website** [www.lecleziogallery.com](http://www.lecleziogallery.com)

**Address** 157, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré 75008 Paris

**Email** [info@lecleziogallery.com](mailto:info@lecleziogallery.com)

**Opening hours** Tuesday — Saturday, 11am — 7pm  
Monday by appointment



**PRESS CONTACT**

Julie TOURNIER

[jtournier@communicart.fr](mailto:jtournier@communicart.fr)

+ 33 (0) 6 51 54 85 74