

Forde is an art space founded in Geneva in 1994. Rue de la Coulouvrenière 11, 2nd floor, 1204 Geneva. Open Friday 4pm-7pm and Saturday 3pm-6pm, and by appointment. Current team: Clara Chavan and Camille Zaerpour (curation, management), Ikenë Rrustemi (administration).

3.5.–5.7.2026

Illicit Bookshop, Alain Guiraudie, Ceidra Moon Murphy, Anastasia Pavlou, Wade Guyton

*Exact Date Unknown*

Ceidra Moon Murphy

In her essay *Remembrance*, Annette Kuhn recalls a photograph on the back of which her mother had written: “Just back from Bournemouth (Convalescent) [sic]”. In Kuhn’s own handwriting, “Bournemouth” had been crossed out and replaced with “Broadstairs”, with the note “but I suspect the photo is earlier than this”.<sup>1</sup>

I return to this dispute often. I return to it now as I look at images of people I think I know but know nothing of; objects I might own but haven’t touched; shapes I can make out but cannot name; landscapes and interiors I think I have been in but it’s too dark to say for sure.

These plotless, inconclusive works confront us with an absence of stories, tempting us to create them where they do not exist. With tired eyes, I look at dead ends from which I can’t quite reverse. They are at once intimate and totally anonymous, giving everything and nothing of the artist. In their persistent landmarklessness, we find, as with Kuhn’s family photo, cues for conflicting associations. These conflicts give rise to narratives, the ultimate objects of suspicion. As we watch, we are lured into creating the many missing contexts of these works, and together form a sort of collective biography—a catalogue of unsung scenarios: of walking; of waiting; of dimly lit rooms and streets; of looking in and looking out; of playfulness; of stillness—all with their exact dates unknown.

Psychologist Jerome Bruner argues, we make sense of reality by organising experience into narrative form, such that events become “cognizable” only when emplotted within a story.<sup>2</sup> Narratives and their interpretation are not determined by the facts but shaped by our expectations of narrative coherence, which itself stems from our socially constructed, often normative, beliefs about human behaviour. The impulse toward storytelling structures the way we encounter images, compelling us to impose meaning, as if transcribing them into words and compiling them into tales are the only ways of making them visible.

Might we do away with narrative this one time? If narrative is a primary means by which humans construct reality, the desire to resist storytelling underscores the radical openness of these images, which continually return the viewer to a state of interpretive beginning. Unlike a story, which becomes muddied through retelling, these works, in their enduring indeterminacy deny that possibility. Each time I revisit them, I am back at the start. And I am happy to stay there.

1. Annette Kuhn, “Remembrance,” in *Family Snaps: The Meanings of Domestic Photography*, eds. Jo Spence and Patricia Holland (London: Virago, 1991), 397.

2. Jerome Bruner, “The Narrative Construction of Reality,” in: *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 1 (1991): 1–21.

1.  
Alain Guiraudie, *Homme devant un bateau Marais Poitevin*, 2022\*

2.  
Alain Guiraudie, *Clermont jeune à capuche assis*, 2022\*

3.  
Alain Guiraudie, *Bunker 3 hommes voiture au fond Saint-Nazaire*, 2022\*

4.  
Alain Guiraudie, *Tourcoing Joggeur Vélo et 3 personnes qui regardent*, 2018\*

5.  
Alain Guiraudie, *Homme qui tire son chien Besançon*, 2022\*

6.  
Anastasia Pavlou, *The Beautiful Ordinarity of Life Simply Occurring (2)*, 2023, 86 × 38 × 3.5 cm, silver gelatin print, hand printed by the artist. Courtesy of the artist

7.  
Anastasia Pavlou, *The Beautiful Ordinarity of Life Simply Occurring (3)*, 2023, 107 × 40 × 3.5 cm, silver gelatin print, hand printed by the artist. Courtesy of the artist

8.  
Alain Guiraudie, *Joueurs d'échecs nuit Locarno*, 2022\*

9.  
Alain Guiraudie, *Angers fontaine jeune homme en noir*, 2021\*

10.  
Alain Guiraudie, *Clermont-Ferrand Femme et Chien nuit*, 2021\*

11.  
Alain Guiraudie, *2 femmes 2 fillettes plage Busan*, 2021\*

12.  
Alain Guiraudie, *Clermont-Ferrand 4 fenêtres*, 2022\*

13.  
Alain Guiraudie, *Clermont trottinette phare*, 2021\*

14.  
Wade Guyton, dessin préparatoire pour *Untitled Action Sculpture*, 1999, stylo-feutre sur feuille quadrillée, 34 × 39 cm. Courtesy of the artist

15.  
Licit Illicit Bookshop

16.  
Anastasia Pavlou, *The Beautiful Ordinarity of Life Simply Occurring (1)*, 2026 (2023), 119 × 50.5 × 3.5 cm, silver gelatin print, hand printed by the artist. Courtesy of the artist

\*60 × 46 cm, C-print on Fuji Flex paper. Courtesy of the artist and Crèvecœur, Paris.

