

ARTFORUM

Ian Wallace: Critic's Pick

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Ian Wallace, *Event Structure III*, 2015, photolaminate with acrylic on canvas, 80 x 60".

There is a scene in Jean-Luc Godard's masterpiece *Masculin Féminin* (1966) in which Chantal Goya leans over to the handsome Jean-Pierre Léaud and remarks, "You dummy, I love you." Léaud's attention, however, is held by the action playing out on the cinema screen before him. Not surprising for Ian Wallace, the symbolic separation of the sexes, a mediation of experience through film, and the foreclosed gaze of a desired subject are motifs as recurrent in his ongoing body of work as they are in Godard's oeuvre.

In the case of Wallace's series "Masculin/Féminin," 1996-, the artist also looks to explore themes of disjunction. In *Where Are You (Masculin/Féminin)*, 2015, two black-and-white photolaminate stills from Godard's film are affixed atop intersecting monochromatic planes of white and yellow acrylic. The abutting fields of color amplify the disconnect between Léaud and Goya, whose opposing gazes foreground their isolation from each other. Wallace's deployment of this medium would seem to evince Gilles Deleuze's notion of the freeze-frame as representative of a greater "logic of disembodiment."

Utilizing actors for his series "Event Structure," 2007-, Wallace photographs everyday Parisian mise-en-scènes, mounting the resulting color images onto color-blocked canvases in a manner similar to the works belonging to his "Masculin/Féminin" project. And while his male and female protagonists are here depicted in the same image, as in *Event Structure III*, 2015, their gazes nonetheless fail to align. For Wallace, the look of love is more like a cold stare.