

« *Every New Beginning Comes From Some Other Beginning's End* »

Gunner Dongieux

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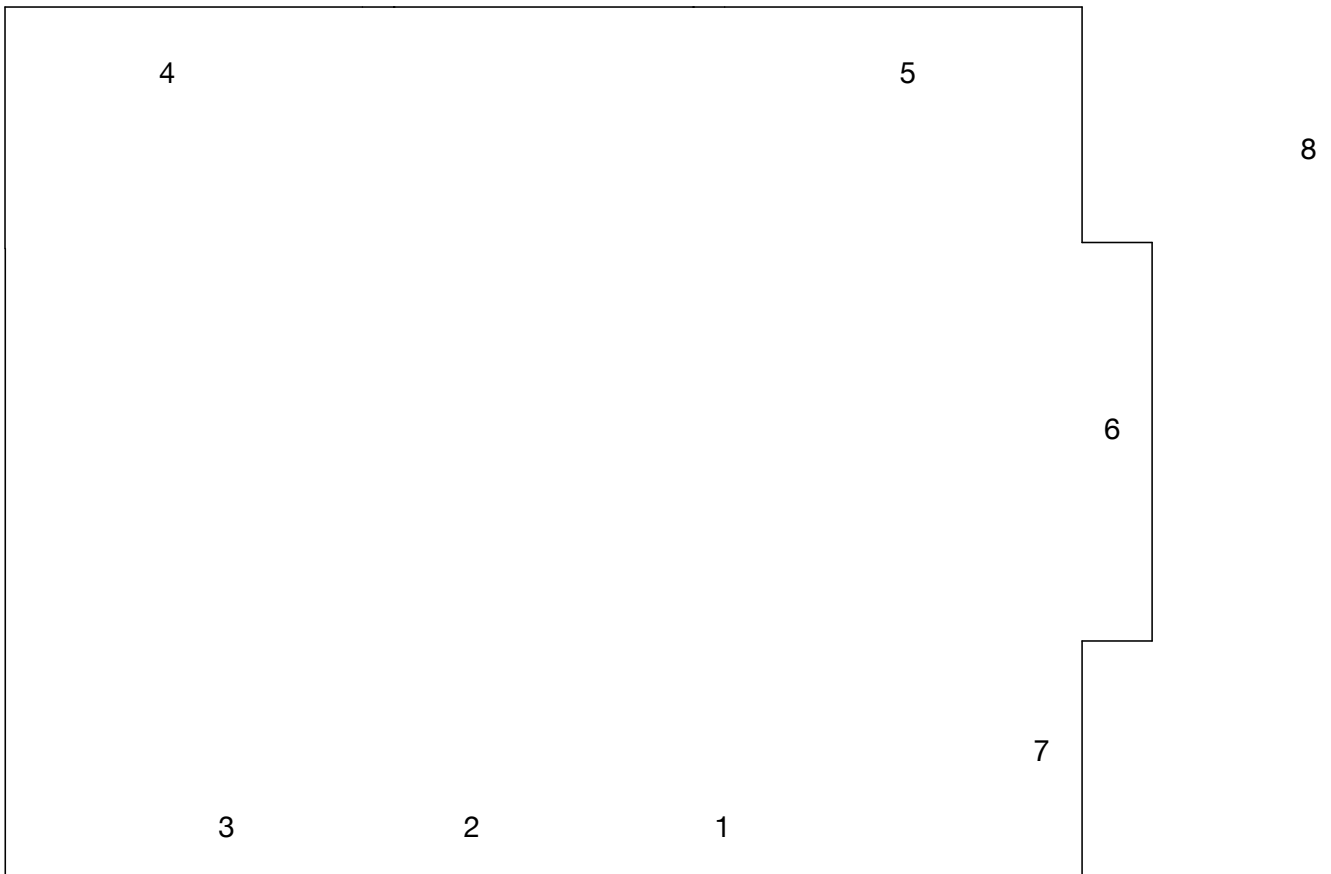
Spaanse Gallery



Exhibition text by Christopher Gambino :

I need you, viewer, to watch me sing. Otherwise, it's not karaoke, I'm just alone and drunk at the bar. I wouldn't say that I'm a vocalist, necessarily, but being a vocalist is not the point. The point is that I have a deep reverence for the form. I am not doing this for me. Well, I am doing it for me, but I'm also doing it for you, the viewer. This is a performance, yes, but a performance is a transaction: you give me stakes, and I give you a show. I find it hugely frustrating when a karaoke performer forgets that I'm watching. What's the point, then? What reason do I have to not do another shot and wait for your song to end if you're not taking this seriously? When I'm on stage, viewer, I will never forget that you're there. I need you, and you need me. A successful karaoke performance requires awareness of the room around you, and empathy. I think the trick is to start slow. The first few notes of a song, especially if it's a crowd-pleaser or an unexpected choice, are easy. The rules of the relationship between performer and viewer are such that the performer has undivided attention for at least a bar or two, that's just a given. An aware and empathetic karaoke performer will wait until that attention starts to wade until they crescendo in some way, like, adding choreography, maybe increasing in volume, or introducing a prop or some kind of novel vocal affect. I like to wait until I notice people in the crowd having an unrelated conversation. Beginning this crescendo too early, or starting out too big, just means that there's nowhere to grow, and I am not interested in stale performances. A successful karaoke performance is a delicate balancing act of deciding which tricks to reveal, and when, and which tricks to conceal until the next song. Karaoke is an attention economy, a game. Each performance should bring something new, something bigger, something that the viewer hasn't seen yet. I think drinking heavily helps with this. Another element of a successful karaoke performance is respect. A disrespectful karaoke performer might sing in a silly voice, choose a ridiculous song, deliberately avoid projecting into the microphone out of shyness, or behave in other ways which insult the patience and intelligence of their viewers. As I said earlier, I am not doing this for me. I don't think that a respectful performer has to be classically good, either. In fact, a classically good vocalist is fundamentally unrelatable in a lot of ways, there's just something inaccessible about skill in this context. Anyway, this is all to say that your viewer doesn't actually owe you anything, it is your responsibility to give them something to engage with, which requires trust. The fastest way for a performer to break that trust is to prioritize their experience over the viewer's, to forget that the experience that they are having is visible, that it has duration. You, the viewer, place your trust in me, the performer, to not waste your time. And I won't, viewer, I would never. I have a song in my heart, and I can't wait to share it with you.

Don't tell me not to live, just sit and putter
Life's candy and the sun's a ball of butter
Don't bring around a cloud to rain on my parade
Don't tell me not to fly, I simply got to
If someone takes a spill, it's me and not you
Who told you you're allowed to rain on my parade?
I'll march my band out
I'll beat my drum
And if I'm fanned out
Your turn at bat, sir
At least I didn't fake it, hat, sir
I guess, I didn't make it
But whether I'm the rose of sheer perfection
A freckle on the nose of life's complexion
The cinder or the shiny apple of its eye
I gotta fly once, I gotta try once
Only can die once, right, sir?
Ooh, life is juicy, juicy and you see
I gotta have my bite, sir
Get ready for me, love, 'cause I'm a comer
I simply gotta march, my heart's a drummer
Don't bring around a cloud to rain on my parade
I'm gonna live and live now
Get what I want, I know how
One roll for the whole shebang
One throw, that bell will go clang
Eye on the target and wham
One shot, one gun shot and bam!
Hey, Mr. Arnstein, here I am
I'll march my band out
I beat my drum
And if I'm fanned out
Your turn at bat, sir
At least I didn't fake it, hat, sir
Guess, I didn't make it
Get ready for me, love, 'cause I'm a comer
I simply gotta march, my heart's a drummer
Nobody, no nobody is gonna rain on my parade!



1. ***Dancing In the Dark***, acrylic and collage on canvas, 45x30cm
2. ***Hurt***, acrylic and collage on canvas, 45x30cm
3. ***When a Man Loves a Woman***, acrylic and collage on canvas, 45x30cm
4. ***In the End***, acrylic and collage on canvas, 45x30cm
5. ***1 Thing***, acrylic and collage on canvas, 100x80cm
6. ***Hide and Seek***, acrylic and collage on canvas, 40x26cm
7. ***Fast Car***, acrylic and collage on canvas, 40x26cm
8. ***Karaoke Duet*** (Gunner Dongieux and Karla Zurita), audio, 1:23:52 (loop)