IN SITU
FABIENNE LECLERC

43 RUE DE LA COMMUNE DE PARIS
93230 ROMAINVILLE FRANCE
T +33 (0)1 53 79 06 12
GALERIE@INSITUPARIS.FR
WWW.INSITUPARIS.FR



Danse européenne 3, 2026

Martin Dammann

Danse européenne

November 8 - December 19, 2026

OPENING : November 8, 2026, 3-7pm

« Danse Européenne » (European Dance) seeks to offer an atmospheric reading of the growing anxieties that have been sweeping across Europe and its people in recent years. Martin Dammann depicts fears that manifest themselves through social movements, climate disasters and the polarisation of political life. A distant clamour, abrasive gatherings and a sense of entropy permeate his watercolours, giving shape to a sensitive, territorially grounded exploration of fear.

Danse Européenne 1 introduces the series through the motif of the Dance of Death, which dates back to the Middle Ages and was used to depict death and the equality of all in the face of it. A circle of ghostly figures whirls beneath the bewildered gaze of a woman, evoking the widespread nature of fear across a broad range of social groups. Danse Européenne 3, meanwhile, conjures up a ball attended by a post-bourgeois society on the verge of being displaced. Inspired by a ballroom scene in Andrzej Wajda's film Ashes and Diamonds, the painting suggests, as does the film, the final dance of a society confronted with a radical political rupture.

This fear of political displacement runs through European societies and is inscribed in their bodies. Each watercolour functions as a collage of historical references and sometimes territorial references. *Danse Européenne 2*, for instance, brings together a procession reminiscent of a medieval uprising and images of the American landings on European shores in World War 2. This temporal juxtaposition situates violence within a cyclical view of history. The bewildered Europeans appearing on the left-hand side of the paintings also contribute to this sense of unease. Their depiction is based on photographs captured by the artist at the Tate Modern, which document visitors' reactions to a critical contemporary art installation. Martin Dammann isolates these expressions, transforming them into manifestations of a broader political anxiety.

With *Danse Européenne 5*, the artist crystallises fears surrounding climate change, heightened by recent heatwaves. Inspired by the wildfires that swept through France last summer, the painting gives form to the rise of eco-anxiety. In its study Eco-anxiety in France, published in 2025, ADEME estimates that 16.6 million people in France experience symptoms of psychological distress related to the environment[1].

The ambiguity of the forms, made possible by the watercolour medium's blurred, fluid contours, amplifies these unsettling manifestations. In *Danse Européenne 6*, as throughout the series, one shape seems to transform into another. The formless emerges from darkness, taking on uncertain contours within which we can imagine the worst. For Martin Dammann, watercolour becomes a metaphor for the workings of fear: it begins at a single point, evolves and spreads through capillary action, eventually forming an amorphous mass of anxieties.

[1] Pierre-Éric Sutter, Sylvie Chamberlin and Léonie Messmer, Eco-anxiety in France: Current State of Affairs, Clinical Concern Thresholds and Determining Variables, ADEME, April 2025, 86 pp

Through the inherent properties of watercolour, its nebulous contours and their interplay of incandescent effects, Martin Dammann becomes an architect of complex atmospheres. Oscillating between dark abstraction and elusive figuration, his works resonate with the thinking of German philosopher Gernot Böhme, a leading theorist of the aesthetics of atmosphere[2]. For Böhme, atmosphere emerges from the encounter between the sensory qualities of an environment and the perception of those who experience it. Atmosphere draws on various phenomenological factors to convey emotion. It is precisely within this encounter that Martin Dammann's practice takes shape: his works do not merely depict fear, but construct its atmosphere. In doing so, they give tangible form to a sensitive, European exploration of anxiety.

- Félix Félisaz

[2] Gernot Böhme, Aisthétique. Pour une esthétique de l'expérience sensible, trad. Martin Kaltenecker et Franck Lemonde, préface d'Emmanuel Alloa et Céline Flécheux, Dijon, Les Presses du réel, coll. « Perceptions », 2020, 272 p