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The novelist Michel Houellebecq and his first exhibition

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I know (and I love) Michel Houellebecq books. But I didn't know he is an artist. For my big surprise, the French novelist is, as well, a painter, or a collage artist. And the proof is the newest exhibition of the writer, "French Bashing", at Venus Gallery, 980 Madison Avenue, New York, from 2nd of June.

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Venus Gallery, 980 Madison Avenue, New York, www.venusovermanhattan.com.

Michel Houellebecq, "Frencj Bashing" exhibition could be seen between June 2 – August 4, 2017.



Although Michel Houellebecq (b. 1958, La Réunion, France) has taken pictures for decades, he began exhibiting these images only a few years ago. Houellebecq's photography is intimately linked to his writing practice, and he often composes scenes in his books while looking at a photograph he shot.

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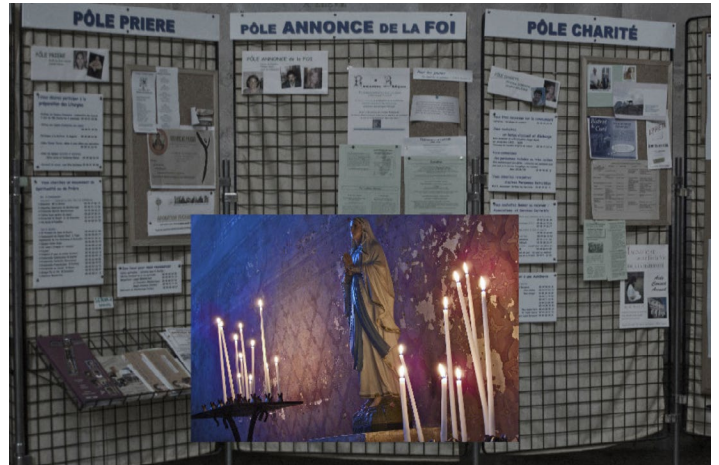
On view in the first room at the exhibition is a set of photographs that variously depict train stations, tollbooths, apartment buildings, and movie theaters. Hung on darkly painted walls and individually lit, these images assemble a dystopian vision of France familiar from Houellebecq's novels. In the next room, the floor is covered with garish laminated placemats advertising such tourist destinations as St. Tropez and Port-la-Nouvelle. Hung on bright white walls with fluorescent lighting, there are heavily saturated images depict kitschy tour buses, coastal views, and beachside condos in France and Spain.



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For “French Bashing”, Houellebecq has re-conceptualized and tailored two portions of “Rester Vivant” (his first exhibition opened in 2016 at Palais de Tokyo, Paris), completely transforming the gallery’s New York space with darkened walls, engineered lighting, floor coverings, and immersive soundscapes composed in collaboration with Raphaël Sohier.

Photography: Courtesy of Venus Gallery, www.venusovermanhattan.com