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The New York Times

What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

LAURENT GRASSO

Through June 17. Sean Kelly Gallery, 475 10th Avenue, Manhattan; 212-239-1181, skny.com.

Now that Emmanuel Macron has taken office as president of France, make some time to see "Élysée," a stylish exploration — not very scholastic, but irresistible — of French political authority by the artist Laurent Grasso. He's among a generation of practitioners, at ease with slick production in multiple media, who have put Paris back on the map of the international art world after long years of obscurity.

Mr. Grasso was given special access to the French presidential palace to film "Élysée," which was first seen last year in an exhibition at the National Archives in Paris. The 16-minute film consists largely of tracking shots through the Salon Doré, a blinged-out cousin of the Oval Office, with its chandeliers, clocks, candelabras, tapestries and gilded everything. The film's smooth editing and sexy electronica score, by Nicolas Godin (half of the group Air), at first put me in mind of an Air France commercial, but Mr. Grasso's film grows more forceful when he disrupts the endless gold with everyday objects in the sanctum sanctorum of European power: pens and erasers, a speech on terrorism ringed with handwritten annotations, a telephone with the prime minister's office on speed dial, a weathered copy of *Le Monde* with Mr. Macron's name in a headline.

What makes Mr. Grasso's lush film more than a promotional reel is its absent protagonist: François Hollande, who won the 2012 French election with promises to be "normal" and to abjure the monarchical airs of previous French presidents. "Élysée" hinges on the gap between grand, enduring architecture and fallible, human occupants, though the film may take on a new cast now that an insurgent 39-year-old — I can still hardly believe he pulled it off — sits behind the gilded desk.