

# UGO BIENVENU

## *FUTUR ANTÉRIEUR*

May 07th — July 25th, 2026

17 rue Martel | 75010 Paris

Opening in the presence of the artist

Thursday May 07th from 6pm

Signing session

Saturday May 09th Mai at 3pm



Among the graphic artists to have emerged in recent years, Ugo Bienvenu is undoubtedly one of the most singular. His protean talent, his wide-ranging passions, and his forays into disciplines as diverse as they are complementary—drawing, animation, fashion, advertising, music—are rooted in a nomadic childhood spent between Central America and Africa, nourished by a rich array of visual influences, from Hayao Miyazaki to Spirou, via Mexican street art. “Seeking to move away from forms seen and repeated a thousand times,” during his academic formation at the École Estienne, Gobelins, and the École nationale supérieure des Arts Décoratifs, with a detour through California Institute of the Arts, Ugo Bienvenu embarked on demanding paths. Already, one finds there an absolute rigor, a refusal of compromise, and a total commitment to an art—drawing—“which truly offers itself only to those prepared to give everything to it.”

Ugo Bienvenu belongs to that category: he honed his craft through short films and music videos for musician friends before turning to comics by adapting a radical novel—could it have been otherwise?—by David Vann, *Sukkwon Island* (Denoël Graphic). There he weaves the threads of his major future works: a line both delicate and firm, childhood, family relationships, inheritance and transmission, and a deep connection to nature. Yet in his own creations (*Paiement accepté*, *Préférence système*, *Premium+*), science fiction quickly emerged as the ideal genre for fertile exploration, for it possesses, in Bienvenu’s eyes, an incomparable quality: that of “speaking best about the present moment and the way we inhabit our world.”

The artist thus conceives a rich ecosystem in which critical reflection on our future—and the place that artworks will occupy within it—intertwines with the confrontation between humankind and its environment, as well as the threats looming over coming generations. For Bienvenu has borrowed from ancient tales their unvarnished discourse, meant to prepare children for hardship and sacrifice. This stands in striking contrast with a drawing style that is serene and polished to smoothness, all lightness and curves, bathed in warm chromatic ranges. The result produces a powerful muting effect against a world of harsh cruelty. Bienvenu also deploys his taste—refined through endless life-drawing sessions—for bodies and the distinctive anatomy he assigns them, poised between a challenge to proportion and a vigorous sculptural presence.

*Arco* brings together all these obsessions while marking a turning point in the artist's trajectory. This first feature-length animated film, crowned with numerous awards (Crystal for Best Feature at Annecy International Animation Film Festival, César for Best Animated Film and Best Original Score, Official selection at the Oscars), stands as a summit of poetry, born of a process both painful and miraculous. For *Bienvenu*, *Arco* is a film about the interconnection between nature and our psyche, resolutely optimistic despite the obstacles before us. The disarming and contagious determination of its two magnificent protagonists, Arco and Iris—whose mantra (“Things must change”) forms the film's key—is carried by movement, light, and living matter throughout a work as fragile as it is powerful.

After this demanding odyssey, *Bienvenu* felt the need to return to “the root of drawing.” This shift in scale—from a collective adventure to a more intimate and solitary framework, from digital tools to ink and Moleskine paper—takes shape in this series of drawings gathered under the felicitous title *Futur Antérieur*. Apt, because *Bienvenu* sought “to summon all temporalities into a single place, so that all ages might meet within one and the same space,” where the future would already be inscribed within the past. Memories of childhood then surface under the seal of the unconscious, through details rooted in a universal imaginary: a gingerbread house escaping from *Hansel and Gretel*, witches closer to the playful figures of Shigeru Mizuki than to the three sisters of Macbeth.

Here, *Bienvenu* develops new associations, bringing together folklore with a discreet touch of science fiction (the inevitable, extravagant sunglasses), magical thinking—what Lucien Lévy-Bruhl called a “residual element of primitive mentality”—and technique. Children are everywhere at home within these works, nestled in an organic harmony already celebrated in *Arco*, whether vegetal, mineral, or aqueous. Are they seeking to escape the inquisitive gaze of adults, like the young heroes of *Moonrise Kingdom*? Each image tells a wordless story. They oscillate between the decipherable and the cryptic, between clarity and blur, never fully lifting the veil on the mystery that surrounds them. For perhaps *Bienvenu* alone holds the key to this wild pageant.

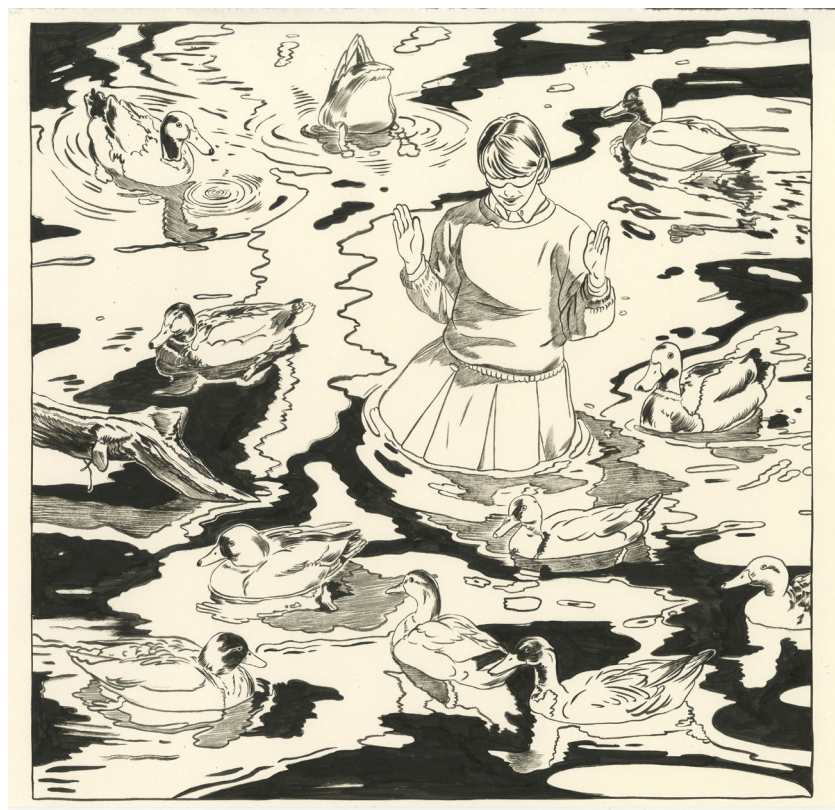
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Ugo Bienvenu, *Futur antérieur*, 26 x 26 cm, China ink on paper  
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