

Aujourd'hui

Achraf Touloub – Standard Condition, Albert Baronian



Facing Achraf Touloub's Sequences, each one identically vertical and rectangular in shape, our view, from a distance at first, seems to be fixed on a peculiar, monochrome richness, evoking a calm reminiscent of deserts or serene seas with lightly fading colours of blue grey, turquoise, copper and burgundy, and yet appearing vibratile, little by little giving way to variations of intensity and depth, distended or tightened. Several vertical drawings of greater or lesser widths, drawn like the parallel visual creases reminiscent of Barnett Newman's 'Zips', accentuate the verticality of his sequences, except one, in which the same visual creasing method creates an optical illusion of an embedded rectangle.

These "painting simulations" are drawn on paper, or rather calligraphised, and are composed of linear sequences of abstract drawings, in forms free from all evocation of the mineral, flora or fauna, non-signified signs, unremittingly repeated until the surface of each piece of paper is covered, all diversely positioned, almost variegated with one another and in different dimensions. These signs write the colour. They define a raster, showing the rhythmic timing of their conception, revealing the calligraphic precision of the drawing with acrylic colour inks on paper with synthetic, plastic pens. The artist made these "breathless", by wearing and crushing them purposefully beforehand to reduce the most intense colour tones that you get with new pens. Mastering movement avoids any protocol to give free rein to the consistency of the visual corruption ensuing from the discontinuous diversity of sign use, which, like all writing, never fully covers the paper.

The white of the paper acts like a breath in two ways: it shows the raised hand of the scribe, his stopping times, when he dipped the pen, quill or brush in the ink, but additionally, it refers to the contemplation of the work, from the more distanced and global vision to the analysis of the details

of each Sequence and any interference arising at the edge of the drawing and the interstices remaining free from all intervention, confined white spaces revealing their greater or lesser narrow areas. Their slim variations go against the “all over” of pictorial monochromes where the accumulation of pictorial layers come to cover and unify the surface of the work. On the contrary, such a monochrome monody, like the repetitive music of Steve Reich or Phil Glass, for example, composing of evolutionary sequences in which the variable tones are based on the slowing of their successive parts, the visualisation of each drawing, adding a different trajectory to the former and as it comes back on itself, encourages the viewer to persevere.

An outline in black Chinese ink slightly mixed in with gouache indicates its origin in the exhibition. A repeated character in successive tracings, concealing its face side with the right hand and stretching the index finger of the left hand towards the knee, recalls the futuristic or Duchampian research that has marked Achraf Touloub's artistic studies. His interest in the cybernetic and his interrogations, in view of the accelerated explosion of new technologies and their universal 'cloudisation', of the possible reduction or even loss of identity of “the standard individual” confronted with an acceptance of a growing individual or mass amnesia and the amalgamation of the real world and the “all over” virtual world, have encouraged the artist, following the example of the scribe, to rediscover an “archaic” creative process in his search for a “non-corporeal” schematic dimension, in order to go against virtual emotions, to revitalise the consciousness of time and to open “paradoxical perspectives”. His drawn Sequences appear, at a first glance, non-signified, but to the contrary they endorse his research on the “pivotal points between contradictions”, offering the viewer a “dimension between the two”, avoiding “legitimate forms” of the Standard Condition.

Albert Baronian June 5, 2015 – July 18, 2015





