

[Ponyhof ZondagsGalerij #3: Wouter van de Koot “The Switch”](#)

Matthieu Ronsse – Une oeuvre. Indeed.

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When I got the catalogue of Matthieu Ronsse by the Bonner Kunsterverein (I have to speak once about the great German Kunstverein) I was almost as excited as when I received the serigraphy of Matthieu Ronsse from them. I thought this very beautiful object was also giving a rather faithful impression of the *oeuvre* of Belgian painter Matthieu Ronsse. But yesterday was the opening of a new exhibition at Almine Rech...followed later by a very “pleasant” performance. And I realised that no catalogue, however faithfully and beautifully made, can render the experience of visiting a Ronsse exhibition and even less attending his concert-performances.



Courtesy Galerie Luis Campana (Berlin)

Matthieu Ronsse is part of the young generation of Belgian painters that comes after the “Flemish wave” of painters such as Raoul de Keyser, Luc Tuymans and embodied by Michael Borremans, Jan van Imschoot or Joris Ghekier. A wave that found the courage to make “beautiful” paintings in a context where painting itself still is taboo. A new generation that has little sympathy for conceptual thinking, but seeks to produce beautiful, yet interesting work, and by this they meant the painterly qualities of the work but also the ability to convey mystery and attraction.



Courtesy Hoet Beckaert Gallery (Ghent)

As Stephan Strsembski says in his introduction to Ronsse’s catalogue, “it is effortless to look at but very hard to analyse, to grasp, on the first look”. If Ronsse skillfully mixes high art and the trivial, faithful to the heritage of pop culture, there is something more about him.

His painterly proficiency enables him to master a variety of medium pigments, industrial laquers, dust, ashes, chewing gums and oil, but always used with dexterous technique. His oeuvre is all about the painting process, which steers him towards an end results but does not always reach any. It happens that in the course of this process he damages or destroys paintings, but this is still part of his work.



Courtesy Bonner Kunstverein

Whereas he makes continuously strong references to art history, he completely disregards any conceptual underpinning in his work. Matthieu Ronsse dares to go to the sources of art, to convey an intuitive personal expression of himself which has a universal reach, which everyone can understand and feel. This is why his work is so hard to analyse.



Matthieu Ronsse, Towerplace, 07.10 - 05.11.2011, Almine Rech Gallery Installation view
Courtesy Almine Rech Gallery

So go quickly to Almine Rech Gallery if you happen to be in Brussels before 5 November. Or else just watch this film I took yesterday at the concert at Le Petit Canon, it will give you an idea of the process of Matthieu Ronsse....