ALMINE RECH

Peter Halley
en España

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The frenetic pace of our time floods our retinas, numbing them, desensitising them to the relentless stimuli that unfold around us at an unprecedented speed. In the face of this overwhelming excess of new and old images — (re)created, (re)constructed, (re)used — ranging from the microscopic to the macroscopic, from the unfathomable to the imperceptible, reality has become abstract, and abstraction has become the new reality. In their relentless flux, images resemble everything and nothing at once: a new visuality has altered the way we look, to the point where seeing has become (not) seeing. Peter Halley is undoubtedly one of the most influential artists of our time — a creator who has attuned himself to the whirlwind of contemporary existence to show us that there is another way to create, to observe, to see. He has done so by redefining our relationship with images in a way that conditions how we interpret them; through a tactile painting that is felt with the eyes, an art that suggests and is ingested as swiftly or as lingeringly as the viewer desires — something explosive and immediate, yet also contemplative and reflective, but always alive and deeply engaging.

Halley's work brings meaning to what Rosalind Krauss observed when she noted that categories such as sculpture and painting have been kneaded, stretched, and twisted in an extraordinary demonstration of elasticity, revealing how a cultural term can expand to encompass anything. In this case, the artist has conceived a new concept for that magic and scientific square — a construct that has played a pivotal role in the dynamic evolution of abstract painting throughout the twentieth century. From Kazimir Malevich and his celestial Suprematism in black and white, to Josef Albers' chromatic and concentric variations that assert the autonomy of colour through the entire geometric lineage of contemporary art history — including influences from traditional Mexican craftsmanship — Halley has produced a form of painting that transcends abstraction. He constructs his signature chromatic cells, interconnected by channels of colour, which inescapably evoke the figurative universe of the new reality that shapes our time.

This vision of a new social geometry is established as a critical diagram, an analytical scheme in which the implicit presence of buildings, urban grids, and their inherent flows constructs the post-industrial landscape that shapes contemporary life. It is a universe that bridges reality and abstract painting, creating a space for both art and existence. In Halley's social geometry, we encounter the luminous, artificial, and at times even anarchic colours of Day-Glo, alongside the mechanical texture of Roll-a-Tex, forming barred windows that serve as a precise metaphor for contemporary existence. These are spaces that are both isolated and hyper-connected, where the digital maelstrom, culture, and mass media are disseminated at the same rapid pace as the relentless flow of data that underpins them. They are (minimal) units of habitation, traversed by the highways of indiscriminate information — a beautiful yet unsettling metaphor for a present that longs to escape its own prison.
— Fernando Gómez de la Cuesta