ALMINE RECH

Andrea Marie Breiling
Sweet Dreams of Rhythm and Dancing

Nov 23 — Dec 18, 2021 | London

Almine Rech London is pleased to present 'Sweet Dreams of Rhythm and Dancing', Andrea Marie Breiling's first exhibition in London and her second solo exhibition with Almine Rech, opening on November 23 until December 18, 2021.

Watch out—I tell myself—be careful what you say, what generalizations you make about Andrea Marie Breiling's work, because what's true of them today may not be so tomorrow. Her art has been changing, growing, expanding so quickly, I'm not sure that even she (let alone I) can keep up with it. This kind of overwhelming energy doesn't burst out very often in the life of an artist, and it's rare that a critic gets to see it happening from up close, so I feel lucky that I got to know this work just at the moment when things were starting to fizz this year.

Today she's still working exclusively with spray paint, differently than even a year ago. They are chromatically richer and spatially more varied, even if some of them are more ethereal, to an almost mysterious degree. The mood is different too: not as high-spirited, more serious, deeper. Large as the paintings are, they suggest something still larger, something like a world in motion—a world that includes whoever looks at them.

Also changed is the sense of touch the paintings embody. And I use that word "touch" advisedly. I realize it's not a word one would usually think of using with regard to paintings made without the feedback circuit between the artist's hand and the surface of the canvas that a paintbrush enables. But one of the surprising things about Breiling's new paintings is precisely that they express such a vivid tense of the haptic—that they are not purely "optical" in effect. This in part because of the variety of marks she is using. In particular the rather feathery, fluttering effects that recur in many of them produce a distinct sense of physicality that belies the rather intangible or disembodied quality of color normally produced by spray paint. There's an experience of vibratory proximity here—as if whatever is in motion in the paintings had just brushed up against you in passing, or rather, perhaps, as some breeze stirred up by that flickering movement had done so. I kept feeling as if some birds were flapping their wings just inches away from my face.

What is it that one so fleetingly, yet compellingly encounters in these paintings? And how can this feeling of momentary confluence be sustained in the permanent present tense of painting—with all its fundamental immobility? The viewer senses within what the paintings makes visible, an invisible presence. The painter herself understands this invisible presence as a spiritual entity, she's not averse to using the language of religion in speaking of her art. I don't need to follow her that far. My proposal is different: that her work mirrors the enveloping rhythms, the continuous yet mercurial movements, the roving, exploratory energy of the viewer's gaze; the spirit that passes so electrically through the substance of the painting, incarnated in the condensation and rarefaction of color, is one's own—but intensified and invigorated by the painter's art.

— Barry Schwabsky, art critic