ALMINE RECH

Vaughn Spann
Reflections: Refractions

Oct 15 — Nov 19, 2022 | Paris

Almine Rech is pleased to present Vaughn Spann's fourth solo show with the gallery, on view from October 15 to November 19, 2022.

For this new series of paintings, Vaughn Spann has immersed himself in materiality and movement, pushing the viewer to consider his works as much in a form of pause, or even contemplation, as in the dynamism linked to the expressiveness of gesture. Proof also that the subject or the motif is a base of vocabulary that can be reused at will. Strong in colors, the Marked Man works presented in this exhibition are seen in a multiplicity composed of two panels of a total scale of more than six meters. The tones oppose and respond to each other: deep blues and purples to sparkling oranges and pinks, creating rhythms and movements that blur the contours and make the image more abstract. From the side, one can see the thickness of the paste and the pleasure Spann had in working with it. He cites Bram Bogart, endorsing his very physical paintings and their construction done in a quasi-sculptural manner. As with the Belgian painter, the attention of the eye is focused on the formalism of the piece, even if obviously the X of Vaughn Spann always covers a quantity of interpretations and symbols. From sexual determination given by chromosomes, notably feminine when it splits, while passing by the letter affixed in signature which testifies to illiteracy, this sign is always engaged. But from his first realizations, this consonant also allowed Vaughn Spann to concentrate on conceptual and aesthetic questions and today, he conceives it more in its seriality. Infinite compositions of tones are exposed in fluid grids, which position him as much in the footsteps of Color Field painting as of minimalism. Spann particularly admires color as seen beyond considerations of symbolism or iconography which vibrates between and move towards the viewer.
He emphasizes the freedom of creation, which is clear in these new paintings. With fast, dynamic lines, vivid colors, effigies of flowers or masks and historical references -There is little chance, suggests Jacques Lacan, and it might be surprising, looking at Vaughn Spann's series of Xs, to think - in their structure and vividness of tone - of Piet Mondrian's windmills when we know that Spann considers greatly the passing of time and the transience of life. Thus, without creating, nor really imposing subjects he deals with loss and sometimes death, symbolic or real, but also with a form of resurrection, a joy that explodes formally on the painting surface.

- Marie Maertens, writer and critic