ALMINE RECH

Approaches to Abstraction

Jul 12 — Aug 24, 2019 | Shanghai

Almine Rech is delighted to inaugurate its new Shanghai gallery with a group show titled Approaches to Abstraction, opening July 12, 2019 and featuring a selection of artists from the gallery's roster, including John M Armleder, Jean-Baptiste Bernadet, Sylvie Fleury, Günther Förg, Ida Tursic & Wilfried Mille. The presentation coincides with an exhibition opening July 20, 2019 at the Song Art Museum (Beijing), titled Abstraction(s), comprising artworks by artists working with the gallery.

"Without a doubt, abstract art remains one of the most radical art movements of the early 20th century," says curator Nicolas Trembley. "All these artists from different generations and geographic locations have different practices but are all devoted to the renovation of abstraction, and thus their pieces create a dialogue together. Abstraction(s) with an 's' in English means the plurality of different approaches to abstraction, with color, a fundamental theme in art, being one of the focal points of the contemporary artists."

In a similar manner, the first exhibition at Almine Rech Shanghai aims to extend this premise to contemporary artists whose works echo such a modernist position.

Two recent paintings by Swiss artist John M Armleder will be displayed among other artists. *Fruit du lotus* and *Faucon impatient* (2018) are part of a series of "Puddles Paintings". The paintings are made by spilling various materials directly onto the canvas (acrylic paint, varnish, liquids for exterior surfaces, but also powders, confetti, glitter and small ornaments). They emerge from a double random rule: first, the application onto the medium is not controlled by a movement of artistic mastery, and second, the mixing of elements causes chemical changes in their original properties, both chromatically and physically.

Jean-Baptiste Bernadet's two works *Sans titre (Pas la nuit encore mais presque)* and *Untitled (Fugue - Screen IV)* are part of a series of abstract paintings reflecting his sensitivity to color, transforming his canvases through a process of overlapping, negation, and composition. Two paintings will be shown alongside one of his Screen works from the series "Fugue", which deploys his colorful imagery towards the sculptural dimension.

Sylvie Fleury has developed a diverse oeuvre, exploring paradoxes of futility and inspired by luxury brand products as illustrated by her *Chanel Shopping Bag* (2008), made in bronze, magazine covers or make-up. Her most recent painting *Eyes To Kill* (2018) is a close reproduction of a disproportionate eye shadow. Turning into geometry-like compo- sition, this makeup palette witnesses the balance between figuration and abstraction at stake in Fleury's oeuvre.

The exhibition is completed with *Untitled* (1998), a blue, orange, green and black dot painting by Günther Förg, widely regarded as a seminal post-war German artist. Förg's work encompasses a variety of media. Gradually, by adopting a brighter color palette and a more abstract approach, he achieved a complete command of color to create space and form, opening up new perspectives in his painting. The painting on display significantly evokes the aesthetics of Ernst Wilhelm Nay (1902-1968), one of Germany's most revered painters.

Ida Tursic & Wilfried Mille's paintings can be at once figurative in subject but abstract in treatment. In their recent work *Silver landscape, four multicolored* (2018), Tursic & Mille embrace abstraction, with light and touches. Oversized spots of vivid colors are drawn from a palette, then enlarged and painted back on a bright silkscreen landscape. Ida Tursic and Wilfried Mille are nominated for the Prix Marcel Duchamp 2019.

On the occasion of this opening group show, Almine Rech Shanghai will also invite local audiences to visit the space and view a showroom presentation of Jeff Koons editions.