ALMINE RECH

Water Always Moves On
Gioele Amaro, Charlotte Beaudry, Christian Hidaka, Anthony Miler, César Piette, Chris Succo

Jun 12 — Aug 1, 2020 | Brussels

Almine Rech is pleased to present "*Water Always Moves On,*" a group exhibition that will take place in the Brussels gallery from June 12 – August 1, 2020.

Divided into three parts, this eclectic selection connects artworks by six artists with different backgrounds and practices. It brings together the classical and the new, moving from paintings with digital aesthetics and classical subjects such as nudes and vanitas themes to paintings whose style evokes Piero della Francesca or Paul Klee.

Various artistic movements are reinterpreted, such as Chris Succo's ultra-contemporary take on New-Expressionism, Christian Hidaka's playing with boundaries, Anthony Miler's surrealism, or the artificial realism of César Piette's paintings. The theme of clothing recurs throughout art history: the fold recalls the fundamental subject of drapery in painting and sculpture. Charlotte Beaudry's skirts, scarves, and jeans are another way to treat three-dimensionality and curved lines.

The exhibition opens with paintings by German artist Chris Succo, who presents a new series of paintings with explosions of colorful watercolour sprayed on the pure white of the canvas. His folding technique gives rise to abstract landscapes overflowing with energy.

The second part of the exhibition is an invitation to discover four other artists whose work echoes one another.

French artist César Piette's use of traditional techniques connects him to the history of figurative painting: monochromatic layers, perspective, light, composition, and very significant shading effects. Painted with an airbrush, his "hyperplastic" images include three-dimensional effects, intersecting with design, photography, and advertising. His subjects remain resolutely classical: a nude, a bird, a vanitas.

Although he comes out of the practice of illustration and the world of comics and video games, Piette conceives of his work as a construction game. Here, the artificial object is emphasized and the playful nature of the toy is taken seriously and combined with art historical references.

London artist Christian Hidaka's costumed figures are as frozen as icons and merge with the geometry of the setting. Hidaka's unclassifiable imagery is theatrical and enigmatic. With references to religious art and the Italian Renaissance and echoes of the surrealist landscapes of De Chirico, his artworks take the form of diptychs, and preparatory studies constitute a major part of his creative process.

In Charlotte Beaudry's work, large portraits of teenaged girls and motifs of folds of clothing express a head-on relationship to reality. This motif and these fabrics evoke collections, fashion shows, and the movement of fashion in its artistic dimension, with variations and colors creating motion. In her *Skirt* series, the Belgian artist plays with the "iconic" function of clothing and pays tribute to film stars such as Isabelle Huppert and Chloë Sevigny.

Italian artist Gioele Amaro, who lives in Paris, defines himself as a digital painter. He combines traditional media and new technologies. His artworks are "painted" digitally and printed on canvas. He then meticulously reworks them by applying several layers of varnish, creating distorted projections that fascinate and confuse the viewer. His images evoke anamorphosis, a classic technique that allowed artists to slip hidden messages — which were sometimes subversive — into their paintings.

The drapery, folds, and creases in his artwork emphasize the visual illusion. With his use of color and three-dimensional effects, he puts a new twist on the original technique and moves figurative representation into the realm of the abstract. We are looking at selfies, fogged-up mirrors that disturb our sense of reality.

Finally, the show concludes with a room devoted to American artist Anthony Miler, who surprises us with a powerful opposition. Miler presents two contradictory sides of his work: on the one hand, gentle, peaceful compositions depicting landscapes with supple curved lines, and, on the other, graphite drawings with dark, cross-hatched outlines. His graphic work recalls Paul Klee's "Collections of Signs" (1924).

This is resolutely contemporary art that does not hesitate to claim its connections to the past.

- Milena Oldfield