ALMINE RECH

Tenderness

Feb 4 — May 22, 2022 | Consortium Museum, Dijon, France

Tursic & Mille

Curated by Eric Troncy

Tenderness, Tursic & Mille's exhibition at the Consortium Museum, gathers about fifty paintings made over the last five years, with half of them shown here for the first time. It will be presented from February 4, 2022 to May 22, 2022.

Most notably, it includes several artworks from the series *Peindre la peinture*, begun last year with *Blue Monday* (2021) and exhibited at Max Hetzler Gallery in London. Painted principally on wood supports, this series depicts characters wrestling with spots of color.

Both born in 1974, in Belgrade (Serbia) and Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) respectively, Ida Tursic and Wilfried Mille have been working together since 2000. Maybe because in the early days their apparently figurative paintings depicted erotic scenes, or quoted images from Andrei Tarkovsky, their subject matter might seem of utmost importance. It is not so. Paradoxically, an efficient way to consider their practice is to look at it as abstract painting (which it is in essence) that contains figurative elements, whose function is to concede to viewers a touch of this kind of storytelling that appears to rule the cool relationship they maintain with art.

Hence, on the large abstract painting *La Cosa Emmental* (2020), the representation of a small piece of cheese seems to act as an intercessor to help access the artwork. The question of the subject in Tursic & Mille's painting is a decoy in every sense of the word: it deceives and baits. For the true subject of their artworks is painting itself, in the classical tradition that goes from Francis Picabia to Christopher Wool.

"The question of 'how' presupposes the question of 'what' [is to be done] that Mario Merz asked in 1968. In practice, the 'how' sometimes triggers the 'what.' For us, today's painting cannot be reduced to a question of style anymore, or to the affiliation to this or that famous two categories that were abstraction and figuration… Besides, abstract or figurative painters have worked after reproductions of images for a long time. Painting is not this OR that, painting is this AND that. All of this at once or alternatively; painting is now and it is a vast field of possibilities. We live in an era of great freedom (and it is within reach). In our practice we are therefore opposed to a certain monomaniac conception of painting. Painting cannot be a frozen gesture, or copyrighted like a trademark. It must be alive, reflexive, perpetually in motion. Painting must be open to all suggestions its practice will induce, painting must be opportunistic and self-conscious," stated Tursic and Mille during a lecture at the Collège de France on October 31, 2014.

Displayed in the last gallery at the Consortium Museum, *Tenderness* is the artwork that gives the exhibition its title; it is an "augmented" take on *Le Canard Inquiétant* (1959) (*The Disquieting Duck*), a landscape painting found at a flea market on which Asger Jorn painted a huge duckling that is very similar to a child's drawing.

Tenderness also includes an installation made with several dozen cigarette butts and apple cores (probably Cézanne's) cast in bronze—a completely new development for Tursic & Mille—associated with their Hitchcock-inspired version of Courbet's *L'Hallali au Cerf* [*A Deer Hunt – The Kill*] from 1867.

— Éric Troncy