ALMINE RECH

Summer

Jun 13 — Aug 1, 2020 | Paris

Almine Rech Paris is pleased to present *Summer*, a group exhibition from June 13 to August 1, 2020.

Echoing the *Spring* group show held at Almine Rech Shanghai, this new Paris exhibition focuses on some of the gallery's most iconic artists: Karel Appel, John M Armleder, Jean-Baptiste Bernadet, Brian Calvin, Johan Creten, Gregor Hildebrandt, Allen Jones, Alexandre Lenoir, Taryn Simon, Tamuna Sirbiladze, Thu Van Tran and Tursic & Mille.

Summer explores the artist's gesture in its jubilant dimension, setting aside considerations of form and generation. There is evident jubilation in the inception and conceptualisation of an artwork, in defining its intent, deciding on its form, but also in actually making it. This enjoyment can be expressed through colour, materials, gestures and the traces they leave. It conditions a piece's intrinsic beauty, but also the emotion it arouses. Add to this the artist's pleasure in toying with references, subjects or categories set forth in the history of art and which, over time, have ceased to be an "end" in the academic sense, but merely a means or pretext.

How can artists deal with – or twist – visual motifs that can be seen as so many clichés: landscapes, flowers or bouquets, portraits, or genre scenes? And how can they avoid the pitfalls of strict categorisation – say realism or abstraction – while placing their work somewhere in between and question the image and what it represents (or not) beyond its mere appearance?

The pieces by Karel Appel, Jean-Baptiste Bernadet or Tursic & Mille express a vision of the landscape in which representation deliberately strays from naturalistic considerations: with Appel, gesture and colour take an expressionist turn; Bernadet immerses us in sensory perceptions of colour and light; Tursic & Mille layer a found image (a black and white landscape photograph) with painting, dotting the canvas surface with brightly-coloured flowers.

Brian Calvin revisits the tradition of the portrait without embracing its conventions, and his models are either born from his imagination or anchored in "stereotypes": every portrait – canvas or drawing – claims neutrality which, when combined with a gesture (solid colours, hatching), reaches a form of abstraction. The same goes for the large drawing on canvas by Tamuna Sirbiladze, halfway between still life and abstraction.

The paintings by Allen Jones and Alexandre Lenoir are genre scenes, yet devoid of narrative ambition; in both, what is at stake is how they occupy their large format, their colour and "process" – here, painting appears beyond images acting as so many decoys or visual traps.

With its sophistication and apparent allure, John M Armleder's painting ironically questions the history of abstraction and notions of randomness beyond which looms the ambiguity of a certain formalism, the gesture (or its spillover), the colour splashed on the canvas, while at the same time asserting its joyful beauty.

Johan Creten's flowers throb curiously, like so many vulvas, at once tactile and moist; a few touches of colour add vibrancy to the enamelled stoneware's milky, waxen whiteness, made desirable and hieratic when covered in gold, or more enigmatic when they emerge from the opening of a "heart" reminiscent of a bivalve mollusc. Theirs is a fascinating beauty, enhanced by material delicacy and sensuous modelling perceptible under the enamel glaze; the subtle colours and textures all hark back to the sensuality of creation.

Made up of layered magnetic tape, the bouquet of sunflowers that hovers on the surface of one of Gregor Hildebrandt's large pieces is something of an apparition. The artist photographed it to capture its fleeting reflection, but the image instantly conjures other bouquets and other artists, from Van Gogh to Gerhard Richter.

For her series “Paperwork and the Will of Capital”, Taryn Simon used archival material to faithfully reconstruct the floral arrangements that embellish and underscore the official signings of economic, strategic or military accords and treaties. They seem to be governed by a sort of “political” floriography, the rules of which wholly escape the beholder. Likewise, a duality of appearances also underpins the large drawings by Thu Van Tran, which bring together beauty and tragedy.

Françoise-Claire Prodhon