ALMINE RECH

Daniel Lergon
Medusa

Oct 22 — Dec 19, 2009 | Paris

Almine Rech Gallery is glad to announce the first exhibition of Daniel Lergon in Paris (born 1978, lives in Berlin). It is entitled „Medusa".

According to the greek mythology Medusa was the only mortal of the 3 Gorgons, daughters of the seagod Phorcys. Originally very beautiful she was transformed into an ugly monster by
Pallas Athena after having had an affair with Poseidon. Instead of hair, serpents spring up from her head. Those persons looking directly at her awful face were turned into stone. Perseus, son of Zeus, decapitated Medusa by looking at her mirrored image in his war shield, thus not having
been transformed. These aspects of mirroring and transformation are the subtext for this exhibition.

Daniel Lergon shows works painted with transparent lacquer on a retroreflective fabric, a high- tech material with special optical properties. Different to a mirror the light is reflected back to
the light source. The spectator who finds himself in the track between light source and painting can recognize a weak glow or "heiligenschein" around the shadow of his own head.

The artist's painterly concept is based on the investigation of the interaction of light and surface: the cause of colour. Different to painting with a palette of pigments on a neutral ground, Daniel Lergon is using a fabric surface with different optical and physical capacities, quasi as his new palette, now
performing his painting with neutral transparent lacquer. This results in colours by reflection and refraction of light depending on the position of the spectator causing a transformation of the induced image. According to the art historian Ursula Maria Probst the painterly concept is materialised and the used material is conceptualised.

From the article « Mister Universe » by Elke Buhr, published in Monopol Magazine on May 2009 :

While Lergon as a painter is closer to physical science than anyone else of his generation, his works simultaneously speak their own individual aesthetic language as abstractions. They usually derive from a single act of painting, a 'decision', as Lergon describes it. Sometimes they are only a wide, flickering
meandering line, sometimes a shining emblematic triangular symbol, sometimes a differentiated form with firmer regions and finely fraying edges. But that is important for Lergon: it is not only the gesture which counts, but primarily its result, the form, which is balanced close to the figurative and has a visually
stimulating force like a Rohrschach test.
Daniel Lergon is fully aware that, in terms of his expression, he can be classified in the historical tradition of abstract expressionism. It is possible to think of informal painters on seeing his shapes [...]. But he says that he does not regard his pictures as a quotation from a past stylistic era. And one can only agree with him [...] amazingly consistent work on the desk with him, when viewing his large-format pictures and
delicate watercolours and his very specific signature that repeats itself.

The 100-year-old history of abstraction has proven that the non-figurative, non-referential does actually have a content, and this can be found in the individual present of painting, in its formation of knowledge, in the artist's time-bound awareness. And this is why Lergon's brushstroke today differs from those of his predecessors. His subjectivity is decisive, but not effusive and in no way esoteric. His art has an uncramped
objectivity, even when he touches on the final things that inevitably lead to a preoccupation with matter,
time and the limit phenomena of the universe.

[...]
For some of his paintings, the material that Daniel Lergon uses as a base gleams metallically. He applies transparent paint to it. A little matt silver, a little something added, which is nothing as a colour, and what unfolds is a whole vista. Because when you move around these pictures, they change with every step.
Sometimes the paint suddenly acquires a depth, as if you could sink beneath the picture's surface, sometimes it shimmers like a film of oil on a puddle on a summer day, then again it remains dull, almost absent, and locks in its secret.
[...]

The mystery of this work is the material: a retro-reflective fabric which, as Lergon explains, in contrast to all other materials does not reflect rays in accordance with the rule 'the angle of entry equals the angle of exit', but deflects them exactly in the direction from which they came. This is a textile development used to ensure safety on building sites. Or for pictures which can even envelop the viewer in a type of halo, if he
only stands directly in front of a powerful source of light.
[...]
Lergon is in the tradition of an art which is balanced on the border with physical science while simultaneously coming much closer to beauty than avant-garde artists normally permit themselves. [...]