

Sylvain Croci-Torti - To the Wind

16.2. - 30.3.2019

Opening 15.2.2019 6pm

A century has passed since Malevich painted his black square on a white ground, yet since then that iconoclastic gesture has lost nothing of its fascination. The potential and challenge which abstract painting continues to harbour are still as artistically attractive as their ability to conquer real space or test viewers' sense perceptions.

The artist Sylvain Croci-Torti (*1984) from the Canton of Vaud completed studies at the ECAL and thus belongs to a younger generation of that painterly school which is so prominently represented in Romandy. Artists of the older generation, like Olivier Mosset, Francis Baudevin or Christian Floquet, to name just a few, have however already thoroughly explored the field of abstract painting. So how is it possible to raise questions of one's own within such a rigid concept? Sylvain Croci-Torti's first radical decision was to devote himself fully to monochromy. The specific approach he has developed consists of treating and understanding his paintings as objects. He works with their actual presence in space. This enables him to enter into a dialogue with the architecture and its formal idiom and integrate this into his conceptual considerations. As a musician in a band, he also has an affinity to rhythm and repetitive gestures. Both are also to be found in his painting.

Despite monochromy, the painterly gesture, the internal structures of a painting, continue to be a concern for Sylvain Croci-Torti. For this reason, he applies the paint in a specially developed technique, with a squeegee, as used in serigraphy. The dimensions of the squeegee determine the respective width of the applied band of paint and so the gesture has to be repeated until the whole area of canvas is covered. The small gaps and imperfections as well as the omissions that come about as a result of the repeated positioning of the squeegee are definitely wished-for by the artist, as they imbue the painted surface with the liveliness that the artist is seeking.

For Sylvain Croci-Torti, the concept of monochromy may well provide the inner compass with which he navigates through painting, yet the artist has nevertheless found a possibility of broadening the concept in a wilful way. He has begun to use multi-part canvases made up of circular concentric monochrome segment assembled precisely so that a subtle visual play of colour emerges despite the scarcely perceptible seams, like in colour field painting.

If we survey the development of the artist's work to date, Sylvain Croci-Torti emerges more as a master of small slow steps. Yet this is precisely what enables him to analyse issues and contradictions that repeatedly crop up in the working process and to plumb their creative potential.

The exhibition mounted by annex 14 - perhaps one should speak of an installation - is an example of how the artist interacts with space. He plays with the architectural elements and stages discontinuities between architecture and painting that underscore and define the situation more precisely. In doing so he achieves the paradox of seeing architecture and paintings as a unit while at the same time productively using their differences.

Elisabeth Gerber