

Marc Renard, Recent Paintings

Catherine Henkinet, L'art même, no. 27, 2nd quarter 2005

After some twenty years of tireless research, Marc Renard has left oil painting behind to throw himself, body and soul, into a technique of mixed inflections. A radical turning point after four years of absence, a kind of rebirth and a challenge to life, transforming itself into a colourful, luminous and organic apparition. The intuition of a new repertoire to explore...

Starting from a sharpened questioning of the future of pictorial creation, Marc Renard has constantly nourished his imagination through contemporaries such as Cy Twombly, Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter and many others. Always ready to devise new aesthetic axioms, he adopts a personal style borrowing references from manga, video games, illuminated signs and digital imagery — a method close to that of Fiona Rae. In practice, the artist arranges worlds according to his own rules and experiments relentlessly.

For his preparatory studies, he uses software that processes various images cut out here and there, transforming them into coloured anamorphoses, made material through inkjet technique on a unified ground. As a painter, he integrates these various techniques and blends them with brushwork to better fuse them together. The authority proper to the format of abstract painting is preserved, but he pushes back its limits and deepens its depths. Here, colour takes on meaning, springing forth as an inner necessity within a luminous chromatic aura. Moving away from the logic of enclosure, from the dark tones and thick touches of his earlier canvases, he turns and directs his research toward a broader, more global conception of the work: the creation of a painting oriented toward pleasure, the enjoyment of colour, the expression of a renewal centred on society, on the other. The canvas frees itself from systematic organisation: broad coloured fields are sometimes sectioned by demarcation lines recalling horizon lines or the various levels of a Game Boy game. The painting expands outward, breaks free of the limits imposed by the frame, and is multiplied by these lines that cut through the blur without stopping it. Rejecting any form of centring in the composition, he resolves it through an elegant disorder that plunges us into an unstable, floating atmosphere. Various planes and depths create ceaseless comings and goings between the shimmering ground of these canvases and the sharper gestural foreground, where various elements from the painter's hand sit side by side. The all-over effect blurs space and means that this ground becomes a matter whose energy and presence seem to outweigh the isolated forms that accentuate it. A kind of decomposition inspired by the state of today's world, an explosion reinforced by the various techniques used: acrylic in the form of flat, rounded-edge touches, in scribbles; the use of the airbrush; the collage of objects or cut-out images, sequins and polyester fabrics... A kind of joyful activity that allows him to capture the images and symbols of a sanitised world, a modern avatar of imagery, in order to recontextualise them within the very matter of painting. Denying any form of conceptualism, his painting is rooted in the act of making. He creates a weightless world, almost

childlike, revealed by a new force: a painting of desire, born of the optimism he carries toward the future. A strange universe halfway between gestural abstraction, colour-field painting and a high-tech atmosphere, whose virtuality seems to be a “remastered” version of painting's own *cosa mentale*.

Captions: Marc Renard, 2005, mixed technique on canvas, 180 x 258 cm — Marc Renard, 2005, mixed technique on canvas, 61 x 80 cm.