Le duo Afsarian Renard

Marc Minjauw Document, 2016 — project / exhibition-related text

Hripsimé Afsarian (19.., of Armenian origin, lives and works in Brussels)

Trained in art and fashion at the Bishoffsheim School, in painting and sculpture at ..., and in art history at Iselp, Hripsimé Afsarian has been painting since she was 17. She has worked in fashion since the age of 20. With Marc Renard, she created a clothing line, “Afsart”. Her preference for embroidered and beaded highlights can be seen both in her textile creations and in her artistic practice.

“My meeting with Marc was important for both of us,” Hripsimé Afsarian continues. “We found our double in the field of creation. His work immediately spoke to me.”

Marc Renard (1963, lives and works in Brussels)

Marc Renard trained at IATA in Namur. From the age of 18, he has practised abstract painting. It was Guy Gilsoul, his art-history teacher and also an art critic, who made him realise that he was always using the golden ratio (1/3–2/3) in the composition of his canvases. He was exhibited by Bernard Cats Gallery in the Sablon and by the Veranneman and Triangle Bleu galleries.

“I have turned abstraction around in every direction,” Marc Renard explains. “Then I decided to stop using oil and to work only with acrylic. I work with ink sprays, collages and new materials.”

The two artists are now beginning an artistic collaboration, the result of their friendly and professional exchanges. In previous years, the wonderful fashion creations generated by their fruitful collaboration could already be seen. Together they developed a sublime Haute Couture clothing line, each cotton or silk piece being printed with Marc Renard’s abstract paintings.

In constant exchange on everything connected with art and creativity, they are now embarking on a strictly artistic production. Marc Renard begins the work on raw linen canvases, marking them with lines or areas of vivid or fluorescent colour. Hripsimé Afsarian works on this already marked surface, adding delicate embroidery, ribbon highlights, sequins and beads. “I paint with thread,” she says beautifully.

The works of the Afsarian-Renard duo reveal themselves on several levels, in a formal labyrinth of great poetry, almost narrative in character. One wants to enter them, to look behind such a triangular area of colour, or into the tangle of threads. A lyrical, worked and subtle depth of field, like a stage set, the various colour fields dancing with one another, a balanced chromatic range... followed by the delicacy and femininity of the embroidered highlights... The golden ratio remains.