

Pictorial Virtuality

Claude Lorent, La Libre Belgique — Arts Libre, 14 October 2016

After a break of around ten years, Marc Renard returns to painting with a set of recent works that follow on from his production while clearly marking a new stage. Strongly constructed, resolutely abstract, solid, the works open onto spatiality in all their dimensions, not only through perspective and depth. They play on horizontal and vertical planes, on vanishing lines created by diagonals — whether interrupted or not — and multiply ruptures as much as superimpositions and adjustments of proximity. Even when heavily loaded within predominantly geometric compositions, or conversely surrounded by emptiness, the figures in these canvases inscribe themselves in space, within out-of-bounds zones where they are at once anchored and floating. Free. Suggesting an unprecedented world that exists only through painting. Irreducible to any particular reality, yet corresponding to the virtual images that can arise on screens. A kind of cosmos of the digital, galactic in nature.

The bold colours, often fluorescent, multiple and luminous, partake of a singular, highly contemporary universe, in affinity with — though not borrowed from — the luminous excesses of the urban night, and even with present-day clothing trends. It is entirely in step with its time!

As for its formal vocabulary, it has been forged over a century of modernity, with pop accents and structures that shift from informal formulation to repetition, from architectural rigour to gestural trace. By bringing it all together, moving from flat colour to transparency, from emptiness to overload, Marc Renard proposes a synthesis, and must find, each time, a stabilising, ordering point of balance — always mindful that everything is unstable and fragile. (C.L.)

→ Marc Renard, "Axiomatic". MM Gallery, cour de la place du Jeu de Balle, 68, 1000 Brussels. Until 30 October. Friday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.