



Yves Oppenheim

Quand j'aurais circonscrit ma sphère

Until January 10, 2015

Galeria Pedro Cera is pleased to announce the third solo exhibition by the French artist Yves Oppenheim at the gallery.

Following the two previous exhibitions where was showed oil and acrylic paintings on canvas, this exhibition offers a collection of works on paper executed in 2003 and now displayed for the first time.

Simultaneously, the exhibition is accompanied by the launch of a book that reproduces the 61 works that compose the series and includes an interview with the artist reproduced bellow.

Interview with the artist by Peter Wachs, October 2014.

Wisdom is repose in the light: it may be peace through light but it is also the repose that is needed so that nothing comes to disturb the pure movement of light.

Without space, lightless.

Luminous point, look for it in everything. It is never anywhere except in one word in a sentence, in one idea in a speech.

Joseph Joubert 1754-1824

Q: Can you tell us a bit about this exhibition of inks on paper?

R: In looking again at these inks on paper, I am gaining a sense of how little my work has essentially changed in a decade: it has changed its forms, its vocabulary, but in its aim it has not changed; it is still a question of superimposing/juxtaposing colours in order to create a gap and it is this very gap (space) that transforms and translates, that renders invisible things visible, visible things transparent, and reveals itself like a luminous surface from which everything comes and everything ends. Here it's about obtaining it with the minimum of means employed: three or four strokes of a wet brush, which, in mixing together the colours, create a colourful sensation suggestive of a landscape, an object etc... With a focus on the light given off by the space. No large-scale structures, as in the paintings. Just a flash of coloured light that structures a larger or smaller fragment of space. The white of the paper plays a key role: whether it's the light, the counterpoint, the ellipse or the abbreviation. It happens very quickly but at the same time everything calms down, softens, to find a luminous point of balance.

Q: How should a spectator look at, grasp the works?

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R: There is the difficulty, indeed the impossibility, of truly and fully expressing the connections, of communicating the feelings of unconscious memory through colour. As you don't know at what point that happens, you can never know whether you're dealing with one thing or the other and the consequence of this false duality is that your perception passes above or below the logic of colours; reason hesitates to finally give way to feeling. The artist and the spectator don't quite understand each other; they don't share that common space and that instant where understanding takes place; they therefore have no more than the intense and simple feeling of being equally outside of that community: which ultimately creates a proximity and a sort of harmony in which they each pay each other all the more attention because what is being looked at can only be looked at intensely and lingeringly, because it would not benefit from the easy understanding which we enjoy in the world that we share, that world where only rarely is one offered the opportunity and difficulty of having an intimate and genuine dialogue. A sound apprehension of the works emerges from the encounter between the spectator's analytical gaze and feeling and those of the artist.

Q: You quote Joubert's words on light. Could you tell us more about this?

R: As you can see, this question of light is not a new one; it seems to have been preoccupying man since he lived in caves! First, I would say that light plays an essential role in our lives because it conveys all of the information that we receive from outside.

But more precisely, where does light in painting come from? What light? Rather a kind of brightness, but a brightness that penetrates everything, that destroys all depth, reduces all things and all beings to the thinness of a radiant surface. It's a total, limitless, continuous brightness that impregnates all of space and since it's always the same, it also seems to transform time by giving us the power to explore it in new directions. A brightness that makes everything bright and, since it reveals everything except itself, it is the most secret thing. Where does it come from? From whence does it shine on us? From that strange wandering light which sometimes seemed to come to us from childhood, sometimes from our thoughts, sometimes from our dreams (it has the precision, sweetness and cruel strength of dreams). From the demand imposed by space, where everything must be unfurled, through that metamorphosis of time into space.

Q: And what about colour itself?

R: Colour on canvas or on paper responds to different approaches related to one or the other support. On paper, colour becomes attractive through the absence of the obstacles that are openly imposed on it in paintings (the complexity of the composition, multiple connections within a broad range of colour), which creates the illusion of facility, and through the intervention of that very banal and capricious inventor, chance. In order to operate, this chance needs a rapidity that supersedes our rational, calculating mind and thus causes the unconscious to emerge, which governs the memory of our colourful sensations. At this point and at this moment, it's no longer about this work that I must create but of that which no longer has any connection with it, me or anything else: it's a different object that I have in mind, the pursuit of something else which would conceal what I'm doing and who I am, an unknown goal.

In short, I'd say that painting, as a means of expression, is directed at an experience that is supposed to engender surprise through its ability to represent through absence and to show through the estrangement which lies at the centre of art, the movements of thought. The place from which it makes us set out is no more than a springboard to lift us up or hurl us towards a different region to which there is no access: there is therefore a jump, a sometimes abrupt change of level; there is elation or a fall, not a passing from one direction to another but to that which is different, that which seems different from all possible directions; that is, a change of level towards a secret place which should perhaps be preferred to all others, an imaginary space.