

A Body on view

regarding painting

By Vincent Dulom

The fundamental idea behind a meal is found on a plate. In order to fully experience it, you must sit down to eat. There is no other way to experience taste. Even an explanation from the chef would fall short. Painting, much like cooking, assembles materials for confrontation; a body in view.

The search for meaning and understanding of painting are the focus of many texts and essays on this medium. The vast majority would content themselves with postcards to study them with — as if they were pictures. Painting is not, however, an affair with images. Images bring us to a certain understanding, painting, does not. Inherently material, painting should not be contemplated with logic or reason. The thought behind a painting comes from far beyond the subject matter brought to light in a given composition. It is projected, unimaginably, outside of the frame. The motive or purpose of a painting escapes its very condition. The images that allow us to perceive varying degrees of complexity do not help at all with a definition. That is shared between other mediums and disciplines. Liberated from images, with no specific purpose or mission, painting opens itself to form in silence. Nothing can be said to give credence to its presence. Putting a word in front of a painting is like placing a mirror in front of sound. If positioned to be projected, no reflection is produced. Painting — as well as its thought process — does not stem from an idea it can not be researched. One touches on it when one is touched by it, without thinking twice.

Painters often have little to say about their painting experience. It overwhelms and eludes words. If one asks a young painter: why do you paint? The majority will experience the question as an annoyance. They are not looking for anything in particular. They live and breathe painting as a necessity, without reflection. Painting is a matter of close combat, a physical experience, a haptic turn of the gaze to the artists' inexorable temporal presence. To say it in other words: in front of a painting, our attention is transported to the time in which it was painted. Painting is the birthplace of a vision transformed by the friction of time. This vision, each time renewed, is at its very origin. To

analyse our relationship with painting, in the moment or a posteriori, is impossible without harming it, without introducing parasitic images.

There is nothing to understand in painting, more than the thought of the painter, the subject matter depicted is not the object. The object of painting is the manifestation of a universe in which an artist has led their life. The morphological recurrences of works from a temporal period, the transformation shared through the organization of medium and form that manifest through contemporary techniques. They give life to a presentation of time recorded unconsciously, through a natural and ordinary progression, completely unaware, without any particular attention given to the process, and more often than not without admiration. The painter frequents the world, and the world imbues the artist with an era. The most important part of their activity is achieved here. After, comes the confrontation with medium. A total stranger to what preceded it, cognitive mechanisms are engaged, centered on visual perception, and a total absence of logic. All of the attention of a painter at work is absorbed by cognitive situations that stimulate successive modifications to organization. Impressions and discoveries of form, material, light, movement, presences and encounters, as seen and experienced in the world, are endless potential for unconscious creative vectors.

It is beyond me, however, the idea of splitting our apprehension of the world into two detached blocks, with medium on one side, and reasoning on the other. It would be absurd to consider that we owe nothing to words when we work with materials, or that materiality is not reflected at all in discourse. That being said, the mind creates an environment for the senses. The intellectual environment orients the way one perceives the world. Regardless, I think it preferable to bring attention to the body — because the encounter with painting occurs first through the body — a painter, as all human beings, moves from one world to another with body and spirit as one. Their vision is formed just so, their gesture as well. Giving order to material, concentrating on gestures that bring things together and modify them, the painter's life is a window to their contemporary world. It is modified by their behavior, is moved by their lifestyle, a gaze manifested in sight, free of all visual projection, only influenced by the painter's own education. A window open to a time already passed, accompanied by the manipulation of materials that have left their trace. Even if a painter presents things unconsciously, it is the process of painting that formulates things in a particular way. In

the act of painting, one discovers painting, by physical experimentation with materials, in the recurrence of choices we can know nothing about.

If painting should develop, through its contact with other fields of human thought, with images whose intelligence inspire reflection, disturbing, or bringing out a smile, it is inevitably the body sublimated by an époque that floods my comprehension and carries me with it. Painting incorporates both time and the other. It is the perception and the very idea of otherness, of life and of the world. Without perspective, without land, foreign by nature, nothing touches its essence. I only follow one idea in painting: to have none at all. To have no ideas, so as not to skew my vision. That being said, each time that painting has found its way into my work, when I had thought that conditions may be right to see it emerge, I only seize it afterwards. I never see it coming, It always disarms me.

If I were to state my expectation of painting I could say this: during the time that I paint, I am aware of the need to hold my attention at bay. It must not interfere. Wanting in waiting is to force the eye. It is almost that idea. I paint, my gaze floats, with no ideas, time passes, and I am only present to welcome the unknown if it should present itself. Here, defeated by expectation, to a «what did you mean?» I have nothing to say. My paintings don't say anything in particular, I want to live and give life, and hope to share a bit of my journey through the world.

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