

## ARM THE PAINTING

Rectangular paintings, longer than wide, portrait format. On these paintings, colored grills. In oils. Irregular, evidently painted freehand. On top, more often than not, interventions, trails, marks, traces, pictorial events.

In one painting two ways of acting, two method of thinking: a grid, which covers, fills, order, reason; and then chance, movement, smearing, chaos, unreasonable.

Paradoxical situations: reason disorientates the surface, while folly gives it a sense. The paintings, worked on the ground, are stood up, lifted and orientated according to the form which spreads over them. The grill, traditionally, is associated with a distancing of emotion, with cold construction, whilst anything arising from composition, from the body is linked with interiority, expressivity. Here the thread fully assumes the wanderings of the hand, and the movement, although chaotic, is mastered, as if tetanized. Distinctions are erased.

This series of paintings is painted in every color. A first line is traced, with a brush, parallel to one of the edge of the canvas. Then another and another again...

Changing color. And so on, until the entire support is covered. Between the lines, a space of equal width is left blank.

The painter allows himself to retouch the painting so as to oppose the composed aspect with chance sometimes adopt.

Chance is controlled, rectified. Come back, pick up.

One must look for neither logic, no rigor of the connection of these lines. There isn't any.

It's not about walking around the canvas, one side after another, regularly, in a given direction. But, about working

rapidly, linking movement, and colors, without thinking, almost blindly. Of letting oneself by guided. Not to exhaust possible ways of constructing a grill, of cataloguing the interlacing, but to exhaust maybe, to wear out the grill. Wear oneself out.

The format of the painting is on the scale of the painter, his height. Although not monumental, their size is such that possession of the surface isn't possible without bodily effort. Just enough. The canvases are just a little too big for the painter to do anything other than project himself entirely into his action, that of drawing lines.

He can't draw them without thinking about it, without applying himself to it.

The grill finished, pick up all the colors which have served to construct it and intervene on top.

These interventions are done very rapidly, they flow. This call for several remarks.

The grill, not yet completely dry, is certainly altered by what is added, on top. The two motifs melt into one another. And mutually contaminate one another. Indissociable somehow. At the same time, lay flat and risk depth. Tire out, breakdown, decompose the painting, the painting entity, and use the illusion which arises, the space established by superpositions, transparencies.

Call upon the signs, the code of a certain modernist painting, heroic, to weaken them.

For a painting full a suspense, wavering, on the edge, close to collapsing. And don't avoid the temptations.

Play with the link ("maille", in French: derivative of the Latin word macula, the semantic field of the link hinges on two axes which meet here). On one side: the loops, whatever their

material, whose intertwining forms a cloth, a net, a grill, and the boles, opening, formed by each link. On the other : the markings which appear on the plumage of certain birds when they reach adulthood, or the spots which form on the pupil of the eye, or again the blemishes which anticipate the fruit bud of certain plants.

The empty and/or the full. The marks happens.

This rapidity of intervention tells us something else, something which informs us on the painter's attitude, his doubt and questions, his apprehension of the medium.

For him it's a question of not allowing himself to rest between the two operations.

As if the grill was just a warm up. To have a warmed-up or rather to have forgotten oneself, oneself and ones inhibitions, one's taboos. A training ritual. To produce some brushstrokes, after having constrained the spirit, the body, the hand by this repeated action of tracing lines.

The possibility of a fluid movement is based on fatigue, on forgetting. And also on an appropriation of the pictorial field.

In this perspective, the lines are essential. The grill arms the painting.

A grill is an assembly of bars crossed or not, closing an opening or serving as a separation inside a building, and, by analogy, a frame made up of parallel bars, or even a transparent sheet, serving as support, as protection or as a filter; grill can also mean a grid for the reading of texts written in a coded language, and a number-coded painting.

To arms means to provide with arms, to supply a means of defense or attack, but also to equip a ship with all it needs to

sail the ocean, or even to clothe with a type or armor (chainmail), and also to put in armed position, to set off, to set the spring of a trigger mechanism.

Fragment and whole at the same time, centrifugal and centripetal, the grill occupies the painting like an autonomous space, which, like every organization, is ruled by laws, games, problems, energies of its own – link also means any closed circuit in an electric network. Painting as code, the expression of which has to be worked on. Here, the grill serves as a reference point. Wit hit, the painting is provided with an armor, with something that will give it the means to resist and set off the painting mechanism. It anchors and propels.

Once the canvas is armed, the paint can spread over it, ruin it. The painting builds itself on its constant imbalance, its always potential fall.

Frank Lamy,  
*Translated by Gabrielle Laurence*