

## JÉRÔME BOUTTERIN

Jerome Boutterin's seductively and astringently beautiful paintings combine intellectual and sensory information. They exemplify what it means to make serious paintings at this time. Firstly, Boutterin's works have a studied nonchalance that is a manifestation of his ethos of scrupulous honesty. He wants to avoid any kind of trickery, flourish, or skill, so that he can provoke the viewer. He confronts painting's most relevant contemporary problem: the painting cannot but help drag its history of an individualistic, comprehensive world view along with it.

Boutterin's critical distance finds it necessary to provide resistance to this history of wholeness. But the painting must also demonstrate an achieved unity as it breaks down its methodologies. Boutterin's strategies in this regard include a limited palette, in the sense that his color, though full and vibrant, seems to define its place on the canvas as material from the tube. His choices of maroon, dark green, cobalt yellow, ultramarine blue, have stability and seem non-referential. The paint is applied with a brush, and his gestures are matter-of-factly rhetorical, they are not emotional and he is at pains not to highlight the role of the painter, though the artist's hand is present. Boutterin's painted gestures remind us that paint gestures at one time signaled the artists' subjectivity, but at the present time, painterly gestures are now quite simply expressive in the broadest sense--they are metaphors, markers, or signs for expressiveness, but they are not subjective.

The visual pressure of every mark, the drags of a dry, paint-clogged brush, or full wet blending of material that seems not so much applied to the surface as pressed up against it, like a cheek to a window, simultaneously emphasizes the white canvas as an active material presence.

Boutterin has been particularly drawn to the works of Gustave Moreau and the museum near Montmartre that occupies Moreau's former studio and school contains an abundance of his works. Moreau was the principal teacher of Henri Matisse, who credited Moreau with enlightening him on the pictorial power of the arabesque, the curving sensuous line and counterbalancing of forms that satiate the ornament-hungry eye. In Boutterin's paintings, an invisible substructure of arabesque rhythm firmly suspends the seemingly arbitrary paint marks. It just takes a little time to discern the solidity of the compositions, but one is greatly rewarded when one does.

### *Joe Fyfe*

Joe Fyfe is a painter and curator. He lives and works in Brooklyn.

**Recent solo shows:** Gallery Nathalie Karg, Longhouse Projects & White Columns, New York; Gallery Christian Lethert, Koln; ACME, Los Angeles; Ryllega, Hanoi, Vietnam and Gallery Ceysson & Benetiere, Luxembourg & Saint-Étienne (joint opening with Claude Viallat, on december 21, 2018).

**As a curator:** he recently directed "Serge Poliakoff" at gallery Cheim & Read, New York and co-organised "Kimber Smith, Paper works" at gallery Jean Fournier, Paris, 2018. In 2019, he will be curator for "Le Tableau II" at Gallery Ceysson & Benetiere, Luxembourg. Joe Fyfe has written art reviews and essays for *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Arts AsiaPacific*, *Artnet.com*, *Hyperallergic*, *Modern Matter* and *Kilimanjaro*.