

## **Barré**

Christina Zurfluh

The constant search for redefinition and evaluation of its own capabilities has become natural for the medium of painting, and in a certain way even its survival elixir. Although throughout the course of history painting has been declared dead multiple times, it has, up to this day, not lost its special status. The break with a modern notion of painting has made its boundaries more fluid and open. Painting has left a once clearly defined domain and has opened itself up to photography, video and installation. Seen historically, this process of crossover already began with the conceptual and minimalistic tendencies of post-war art. Precisely because painting left behind canvas, paint or stretcher frame, it constantly invites reflection and, therefore, has never lost its significance.

The historical developments of painting have also shaped Christina Zurfluh's interaction with this medium. The intense play with color, the multiple superimposed layers of paint, the smeared black or the traces of white flecks of paint thrown with painterly gesture create excitement and provoke a different, new look at painting, which seems to have grown out of an urban environment rather than the solitude of a painter's atelier.

The artist has completely freed herself from the constraints of the paintbrush, however without suppressing or avoiding references to the brushstroke in her images. She intentionally leaves the multiple layers of acrylic paint applied to plastic foil to playfully calculated chance; she simulates footprints and rubs and smears them again. An almost bodily process for which she uses the floor of her atelier as a workspace. The multilayered paint skin is removed from the plastic foil and applied to the white primed canvas. The frayed edges and the lines, blisters and compressions created by peeling away the plastic foil lend the images a further three-dimensional aspect. Zurfluh's haptic relationship to the image, also as material, quite naturally blurs the classic boundary between painting, installation or sculpture.

The often shrill colorfulness of her images creates associations to pop art, for example to Andy Warhol's image cycle "Shadows", which despite his painterly approach at the same time comes together to form a large room installation. Zurfluh's exhibition intentionally references the narrow rectangular space of the "Fonderie Darling". The paintings arranged in a serial rhythm on the long side are reflected in the columns and extend naturally into their own three-dimensional installation. The horizontally separated two-part monochrome color areas, at times similar to the garishness of Pop Art, contradict and complement each other at the same time. As a sort of counterpoint to this, two of Zurfluh's large works are placed at the ends of the exhibition space, whose vertical color fields create separating but also uniting transitions. The title of the show, "Barré", refers to a term from the textile industry for "defective streaks" or "lapses" mostly found in synthetic fabrics. But it could also refer to an artistic approach that is determined to boldly experiment again and again with the entire spectrum of painterly possibilities and materials.

From Alexandra Reininghaus

Translated by Emily Terényi for the correspondent exhibition BARÉE at Darling Foundry, Montréal, Canada, 21.5. – 24.8.2014