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Aesthetics of violence

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JULIAN FARADE

hors milieuX

Aesthetics of violence

EXHIBITION

October 10th — November 23rd 2024

Julian Farade often states that his work is about fight, about the difficulties encountered by the will to exist and to assert oneself. Ever since I first met and loved his works, I remain struck by the place violence holds in them - from the brutal confrontationality of the wingless birds made in recent years to the series on show today.

This violence is at once ordinary violence, violence of the struggles which continuously need to be revived so they don't get crushed. Violence of emotions, wills and desires that collide and clash. Violence of systems of domination that hinder and mutilate, affecting the lives of the minorities, those in positions of least power. Violence of the world that resonates in Julian Farade and fails in his works. He himself associates the realization of some with the (chaotique and despairing) march of the world: this one was painted in such and such a national situation, in the midst of anguish and fear, this one was accomplished in the course of such and such a geopolitical context, facing the powerlessness towards massacres and genocidal impulses. "Since I have no power, since it seems impossible to do anything, I make paintings"; once told me Julian Farade. The pictural signs can be read as traces, those of a bird in a cage who is trying to get out.

However, the aim is not to represent or figure violence (nor to lament it) but rather to twist that violence to make it into something else, like a refraction mechanism. Julian Farade does not paint the world, but with the world. Standing beside him in his studio, I had the feeling that the struggle, to him, is a very concrete, tangible and daily combat.

The canvases seem to be constantly forming zones of conflict, battlefields: here, he describes, that movement, that surge is "broken" by a transforming line; there, he adds, is a shape of that color, which he breaks, again, by means of a shape of a different color, he "opposes" them, trying to bring out a multiple truth, desirous that there should "not be one that decides more

than the other”, but seeking on the contrary to “leave a room for everyone”. Using velvet canvas for several of his paintings, he deceives the strong resistance of the fabric, which refuses to absorb paint and rejects it, almost “slapping it back in the face” of the painter: “to go against that reaction, that’s what I’m interested in”.

This arm-wrestling also leads the dynamic between the signs themselves, which answer and confront each other, inside the canvas, from one canvas to another - like a ladder that, when flipped over, becomes a barrier preventing an animal from passing through. In this way, the fight is both formal and physical, the canvas becoming a *constat*, a report - as in performance - on the combat. An observation not without ambiguity, which the crocodile is a witness for, dangerous yet sympathetic animal, a stuffed toy with threatening pins, but twisted and constrained. Or these assumed shelters, wooden teepees without fabric, supposed to protect but from what and how? Hence, probably, the discomfort we can’t refute, balanced between the stability and the esthetic harmony, and the perception, through the signs of confrontation, power and constraint.

Antoine Idier