

ADRIEN COUVRAT

What are the sections sections of ?

Opening in the presence of the artist June 12 2014

Exhibition : June 12 – July 19 2014

Adrian Couvrat's work cannot be grasped at a single glance. What appears at first sight as a dynamic composition livened up by strips crossing the painting diagonally, which then disappear by the slightest movement of the head, transformed into a vast monochromatic surface. Each of his works escapes the regard of the onlooker; if they make one single step to the right or left a different work emerges, superposing itself on the previous composition. Even when the viewer gets as close as possible to the painting in order to get a fixed image; it remains illusive. Light makes the work vibrate and lends it a third dimension. Some spots look hollow while others get inflated as if commanded by the viewer's eyes. The canvas asserts itself as an interactive space where each movement creates a tension between two forms and two colours, each of which dominates the other without totally satisfying the spectator.

Couvrat's ability to act upon the perception of the viewer is the result of a long period of experimentation and reflection, which has allowed the artist to endow his canvases with the capability of transforming and multiplying movements of colours and shades.

The young painter has successfully adopted the innovations of optical and kinetic art as it emerged in the 1960s and was brought into a new era of development in the last decade. Couvrat's canvases abolish all distance between the spectator and the work of art and thus constitute the continuation of the research of Jesus-Rafael Soto. "The eye has always been my only motor. I was never tempted to make use of the electrical or mechanical motor. My idea was to turn the spectator into a mechanical force."¹ In reality, Couvrat's compositions are set in motion by the spectator. There are many parallels between the work of Couvrat and that of contemporary artist, Pierre Schwerzmann, with both making the spectator destabilized when viewing their work.

Contemplation becomes interaction in Couvrat's work. Not only the ways of looking at things and the schism of the spectator are enticed: it is only by changing his position that he experiences the multiplicity of sensations and the colourful combinations that

¹ Jesus-Rafael Soto, Entretien avec Carlos Diaz Sosa, « La Gran Pintura es Cosade Progreso Historico », dans El Nacioal [Caracas], August 1st 1966, cited in PIERRE Arnauld, « Chronologie », Jesus-Rafael Soto, cat. d'exp., Paris, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, 1997, p. 196.

constitute the essence of his art. The era of the traditional fixity of the works of art has come to an end. Both the light that prevails at a given moment and the eye as a motor of perception make that works of art are perpetually reworked.

The notion of the screen is important for Adrien Couvrat. In his work, the canvas stops light and reflects it in a way that, owing to the undulations and vibrations which appear on its surface, another representation of the screen may interfere with the spectator's perception of the work. The originality of the artist's research stems from the way he integrates into abstract painting – while insisting on some of the most traditional elements of painting – our actual vision of the world.

Zoé Haller, historienne de l'art

Adrien Couvrat obtained the diploma of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (ENSBA, Paris, 2008) in Paris in 2008 with the unanimous congratulations of the jury. His formation includes a degree in spatialisation, with video programming in real time, delivered by the Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique / Musique (IRCAM, Paris, 2008). Among the collective exhibitions in which he took part, we must mention Regards at the Centre d'Art Bastille (CAB) in Grenoble in 2009, Entre-temps, La Poudrière, Bayonne 2010. He received the prize Jeune Espoir Feuillate in 2009. In December 2013 he participated in a collective exhibition Derrière la couleur, along with Larry Bell and Sam Francis among others, at the Galerie Maubert in Paris and in 2014, represented by the same gallery at Art Paris