

November 19, 2016 - January 14, 2017

At first glance he seems sensible enough, albeit imbued with bonhomie, but who could suspect that behind this unruly mane of hair, an absent-minded professor lies in ambush? Let's start by making it quite clear for once and for all: Julien Nédélec is the artistic version of a one man band, a jack of all trades who faces alone the blank page of his oeuvre. He lays claim to a romantic and classical approach to studio painting, where he can control his entire artistic production, relentlessly manage every detail and fill in every crack. Don't talk to him about detachment: he does his duty, he labours, you could even say he slogs away like a 'compagnon', one of those master craftsmen who aim for perfection in everything they do. Speaking of which, let's take a look at his work. The first word that comes to mind is paradoxical: Julien Nédélec is an out-and-out manipulator. He unravels symbols and questions representation by juggling with language, images and sound in a transpositional game whose codes he controls. Hardly surprising seeing as they are his own codes, because he invents the rules, often empirical ones, that play with existing limits. There is nothing he likes more than creating multiple interpretations of his work, those that are planned from the start to which he adds others. In so doing, he proves that both images and their signifiers are actions and not just decorative objects or illusory interpretations.

In this first exhibition at Praz-Delavallade, Julien Nédélec questions painting by manipulating photos to create hybrid works, part painting, part photo, in his series *Someday we will foresee obstacles*. In *Sun and Rain*, which portrays the basic spectrum of a rainbow, or in his paintings on mirrors *Mirage*, he plays with spatial dimensions, as well as the laws of physics concerning light, to blur the borders between sculpture and painting.

It's enough to lose your bearings, however Nédélec is utterly sure of himself, fully-focused on his utopian vision of an artisanal mastery that enables the production of flawless objects, objects so perfect that the artist can disappear behind his practice and reach a world of amusement and poetry.

— René-Julien Praz