

PHILIPPE DECRAUZAT

2 APRIL - 24 MAY 2008

The Praz-Delavallade Gallery is pleased to announce the second one-man show it is devoting to the Swiss artist Philippe Decrauzat. This is the first Berlin public presentation of the artist's work.

Philippe Decrauzat revisits the history of 20th century abstractionism through the medium of his canvasses, murals, sculptures, films and installations. He claims, however, a critical distancing from that legacy, and, as well, from the so-called autonomy of abstraction, supposed, as it is, to set it apart from other disciplines. This leads him to initiate an encrypted exploration which unobtrusively draws its inspiration from the very sources of our popular visual culture, as well as from the vocabulary of abstract art forms in order to create novel images. Each of these sources is consciously deconstructed to reveal a new point of view, or, perhaps, an external interference that will affect the reception of the image by the viewer.

The gallery's main space displays, therefore, an installation of canvasses on the facing, lateral walls. These vertical stripe paintings, emblematic of modernism, appear disturbed as the color darkens as it would under a light effect or perhaps some printing accident of production. The viewer is literally grabbed as in a vise between these two ensembles, which, were they superposed, would be revealed as even and monochromatic. Painting is thus disclosed as a shopworn, biased regurgitation of the forms that came before, because it betrays the rigorous code of Minimal art through the visual illusions of Optical art.

This same principle of a formalistic illusion which would compel the viewer's eye, finds another yet illustration in the film « A Change of Speed, a Change of Style, a Change of Scene, Part II (2006, 16mm, b/w, silent, 3'16"»). The first section of the film begins with a simple play of graphics – taken from opening images of various films – to which are incorporated snippets of text from a science fiction novel by Edwin A Abbott, *Flatland, A Romance of Many Dimensions* (1884), the story of a two-dimensional world faced with the challenge of figuring out what a third dimension might be. Follow then landscapes borrowed from the American serial *The Twilight Zone* (1950's) that appear and disappear in a staccato rhythm that suggests the first recordings of Pulsar CP 1919 (a neutron star, discovered in 1967. Its regularly-timed electro magnetic bursts convey the image of pulsions).

« While the succession of light variations – black to white and white to black – does create the stroboscopic effect necessary to this transposition, these images may also be interpreted as a succession of quick, brief invasion into the fabric of a story » (Lionel Bovier, in Wiener Secession (ed.), Philippe Decrauzat, Vienna, april 2008)

As far as the artist is concerned, « inflicting upon the viewer a forced and disturbing experience, through a rhythmic construction pushed to the extreme of a syncopated pulsation, induces a dialectic, a dialogue between art and spectator. Caught between exclusion and inclusion, the viewer feels agressed and develops a progressive consciousness of his flesh and blood existence. Through this growing awareness, one realizes a parallel arousal of all five of one's senses. »

---

Born in 1974, Philippe Decrauzat works and lives in Lausanne. In 2008 he had solo exhibitions in the Secession, Vienna and Bonner Kunstverein. In the past years, Philippe Decrauzat has exhibited in a number of individual shows in Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva (2006); Praz-Delavallade, Paris (2006); Swiss institute, New York (2006); Mamco, Geneva (2005); Kunstausschuss Basel, Basel (2005). His work was included in several group exhibitions: Musée d'Art Contemporain, Lyon (2007); Sculpture Center, New York (2007); Mongin Art Center, Séoul, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2006), Kunsthhaus Baselland (2005), Casino Luxembourg (2005); Kunsthhaus Glarus (2004), Swiss Institute, New York (2004) and Villa Arson, Nice (2003). Furthermore he is a founding member of the independant art space CIRCUIT in Lausanne and is teaching at ECAL, Lausanne since 2000.