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Painting propaganda: The work of artist Sergio De Beukelaer

His colour-coded canvasses are seen as propaganda for paintings. His rigorous and restraint approach is shaped by his detailed accuracy and precision. And his near-obsessive focus on the colour blue began with and as an homage to Yves Klein. With a solo exhibition of his fat.canvas works opening this Friday 13th May in Berchem's Plus One Gallery, we take a closer look at the work of Belgian artist Sergio De Beukelaer (1971).

Written by Nicholas Lewis published on may 9, 2016 in Art / Portfolio reports

What were your original ideas and intentions at the start of working on this new series?

There are always a few sources to start with, but maybe the most important is the colour 'blue' and its 'tones'. These 'blue-tones' were immediately connected to my girlfriend...To break the emotional part of this starting point, I started to put these tones in codes, for example in the way in which the name of my girlfriend and muse 'Marriane Rydberg' becomes Marianne.RydBerg.Blue (MRB,2014). A very important component of my paintings is the connection with 'daily digital life', I need a fresh view on old abstract painting, which led me to the idea of subtitling my paintings : 'Sub.Titled, 2016'

What would you say was its starting point?

An old fashioned idea in art history, that of the 'artist and his model.' Every painting should be propaganda for paintings constructed in the 'atmosphere of advertising', (Publicity Abstraction,2015). And art must carry a level of tension,...tension in colour, form and concept.

s there something very specific you're hoping the series will express/communicate?

On the first level, there's the importance of colour. The choice is depicted from personal content, in order to create a certain visual depth. I used balanced colours deepened by pigment (Symmetric Colors,2016).

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This is not a 'void' as Yves Klein, but rather a fill-in of white space started from a white fat.canvas. The colour speaks as a monumental and spectacular environment. So, if 'colour' is the most important 'subject' in a painting, the abstract level is there and shows the possibility of an open idea of a painting. An abstract object will show power as a power station and hopefully it blows your mind...

Can you talk to us about your approach in general?

I prefer to produce as simple a form as possible to explain sometimes complex situations in daily life, in different ways and in different contexts. The fat.canvasses (coloured objects) have the intention to give the feel of contemporary experiences on the widest scale possible by looking at art objects...

How would you say this series fits in with your wider body of work?

Reality was always involved in my work. In this last series in particular, 'media' in general plays a bigger role but , of course, most of the time on a more abstract level...a lot of personal, 'private mythology' and emotional premisses grew in strength in my paintings, which led to a more geometric and by far more rational approach of making art...This affirmative 'reality' is being executed in parts, a sort of cut-out. A banal idea becomes a serious painting and a serious subject will be playfully elaborated into the fat.canvasses...

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Can you talk to us about how you see your own work? How would you describe it?

As I said before, there will always a lot of subjects involved in my work, the content is woven within a strong convincing concept. In the 21th century, most painters need the undeniably conceptual performance of painting. The painted object gives the feeling of beauty connected to the environment of every single person. Even a sometimes very abstract constructed painting might bring you in a higher meaning of daily life . A dream i might even say.

What is your preferred medium for exhibiting your work? Book? Solo show? Group exhibition?

Every possibility to bring my work on a wider scale can be interesting, I like every part of it, no joke. Obviously, a group exhibition stimulates the tension or dialogue between art works , and I like this very much. But maybe I'm talking as a curator now...

Who would you say was instrumental in shaping your work?

A balance between emotional and rational size, all these two parts gave me the opportunity to develop a new idea of presenting abstract objects which shining with soft surfaces glow supported by pale blue (SDB2) and a mint green background. Many forms are rooted in the past but the appearance is fresh and new. Nowadays my work started in the context of Funky Philosophy (ff,2016). So this new beginning is the embryo of a further development of coloured paintings with the urgency of contemporary engagement. All these forms and concepts are based on the universes of P.Halley, D.Judd, A.Warhol, E.Kelly, B.Newman, Y.Klein and more....

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