



03

LOCUSLUX
GALLERY

LOCUS

L L X
MAGAZINE

It's only the beginning

Loek Grootjans for Locuslux 03 2009

Si l'art est de la connaissance, la connaissance devrait-elle alors aussi être de l'art ?

Espérons qu'à la longue, nous puissions répondre à cette question comme il se doit.

La Galerie Locuslux entame sa deuxième année à une allure quasi exceptionnelle. La Gallery a su attirer à elle des artistes qui font l'actualité.

La deuxième saison est inaugurée par des peintres.

Pascal Danz, Thomas Huyghe...

Pour Locuslux, la peinture est un pilier de sa politique de programmation.

Locuslux Gallery veut s'afficher avec de la peinture.

C'est pour cette raison que ces deux peintres sont liés à la galerie.

Les expositions de Thomas Huyghe et le Pascal Danz sont faites sur mesure pour un projet pictural en coopération avec des musées renommés.

Le peintre peut puiser à une source où tout est possible.

Toutes les images pensables, toutes les illusions imaginables, tout.

La peinture est vraisemblablement apparue pour rendre nos vies aussi idéales que possible.

Ne vous trompez pas, à l'époque où la peinture est née, c'était à peu près la seule façon de transformer la réalité.

Peindre était une façon de voir, de faire des choix, de ramener tout ce qui était réel sur une surface plane, de s'exercer longuement au métier sous la houlette de grands maîtres, pour ensuite seulement, se lancer.

Les temps ont changé. En fait, peindre est superflu. De nombreux moyens sont à notre disposition pour mettre notre vie en images. Et ces moyens sont également utilisés jusqu'à l'excès. Mais de toute manière, ils ne sont pas efficaces.

Il y en a trop à disposition de tous.

Ce n'est que lorsque Van Gogh a commencé à mettre la vie réelle en images, dans une quasi totale obscurité, qu'on a compris que c'était un événement aussi bien particulier que radical.

Et c'est là que réside la force de la peinture de Danz.

Dans le travail de Danz, on retrouve une connotation de Caspar David Friedrich. Mais rien n'est moins vrai. Dans le

If art is knowledge, should knowledge also be art?

Hopefully we will in due course be able to reasonably answer that question.

Locuslux Gallery enters its second year at an unfathomable speed.

The Gallery has been able to attract artists who matter.

Painters will open the second season.

Pascal Danz, Thomas Huyghe...

For Locuslux, painting is a mainstay in its artistic direction and expressly wishes painting to be a prominent feature of the gallery.

This is why these two painters are engaging with the gallery.

The exhibitions by Thomas Huyghe and Pascal Danz are a prelude to a project on painting in collaboration with renowned museums.

A painter can draw upon a source in which anything is possible: every imaginable image, all imaginable illusions, in an all-encompassing way.

Painting probably began by representing our lives as ideally as possible.

Make no mistake; in the time that painting began, this was just about the only way to transform reality. Painting was a question of seeing, making choices, reducing everything that was genuine to a flat plane, practicing the métier for a long time, being apprenticed to great masters, and then finally undertaking the work.

Times have changed. Painting is in fact superfluous.

There are many means at our disposal for picturing our lives. And these means are used to distraction. But then, in one way or another, these means are not enough. They are too much of a common good.

When Van Gogh began picturing real life and ended up in total darkness, it was understood only then that it was both a singular and radical affair.

And therein lies the power of Danz's painting.

With Danz's work one can feel an affinity with that of Caspar David Friedrich. But nothing is further from the truth. In Danz's work there is no question of idealism or romanticism. In his work, humanity is not in tune with its environment. It is true that they are viewers, but they tend rather to be witness to an apocalypse, and that is in contrast with Friedrich's oeuvre.

The viewers look on and are immersed in light. Not the

It's only the beginning

travail de Danz il n'est nullement question d'idéalisme ou de romantisme. Dans son ?uvre, l'humanité ne fait pas un avec son environnement.

Elle est spectatrice, mais bien plus d'une apocalypse, et cela, contrairement au travail de Friedrich.

Ils sont spectateurs et sont inondés de lumière.

Non pas la lumière romantique de l'unité et de la gloire comme chez Turner et bien d'autres grands peintres.

Non, la lumière du déclin, des explosions nucléaires et de la destruction totale.

C'est aussi pour cette raison, que dans son travail récent, Danz laisse tout s'écouler jusqu'aux bords. De grands à plats monochromes ou des traits dominant l'image.

Une grande lumière plane surexpose un paysage de montagne.

Le paysage est secondaire, la lumière prédomine.

La lumière provient d'intervention humaine.

Bref, le peintre conclut.

Il est un de ces peintres qui, à nouveau, comprend que la réalité n'est à concevoir que dans l'insaisissabilité.

Et que l'insaisissabilité est l'origine de la monochromie.

La toute englobante monochromie qui ne peut être comprise que par l'humanité.

La monochromie dans laquelle se trouve toutes les images possibles, à condition que l'on sache se servir des boutons.

Chez Thomas Huyghe, un autre ordre prévaut.

Il ne peint pas les portraits des détenteurs du pouvoir.

Il peint l'affichage des détenteurs du pouvoir.

De romantisme il n'est plus question depuis longtemps.

Et d'une image idéaliste du monde, certainement pas non plus.

La peinture s'est transformée d'une bienfaitrice en un pou sur la peau, ou, encore plus grave, en un prophète de malheur.

Jamais encore je n'avais eu peur de Madeleine Albright, elle ne me disait rien en tant que Ministre des Affaires Etrangères des Etats-Unis sous Clinton, jusqu'à ce que je voie son portrait peint par Huyghe.

La puissance affichée, impitoyablement mise en image, et peinte idem.

Je n'en dors plus.

romantic light of unity and glory as with Turner and many other great painters. No, this is the light of the downfall, nuclear explosions and total destruction. This is why in his recent work Danz allows everything to bleed to the edges.

Great monochrome planes or stripes dominate the image.

A large plane of light illuminates a mountain landscape.

The landscape is an issue of minor importance; it is the light that overrules. The light originates from a human intervention. In short, the artist concludes.

He is one of those painters who understand once more that reality can only be grasped in the ungraspable, and that the ungraspable is the origin of the monochrome.

The all-encompassing monochrome, which can only be understood by humanity. The monochrome in which all possible images can be found, if only one knows how to operate the buttons.

With Thomas Huyghe a different order is at play.

He does not paint portraits of powerful people.

He paints their public image.

There is no longer any question of romanticism here, and certainly not of any idealist worldview.

Painting has changed from being a do-gooder to a recalcitrant agency, or, worse still, a prophet of doom. I never was afraid of Madeleine Albright; she did not mean much to me as Secretary of State under Clinton, until I saw Huyghe's painting of her.

Power displayed, mercilessly pictured and painted in a ditto way.

It gives me trouble to sleep at night.

Blind Spots: Some Notes on Pascal Danz's Recent Paintings

Looking and seeing. In many of Pascal Danz's recent paintings we find ourselves looking at people who are engaged in an act of observation, of looking or watching. We observe the act of observation. And in every instance, the incident to which the observer's attention is directed is absent. In Danz's ongoing series of paintings derived from the documentation of US atmospheric nuclear tests in the 1950s and 60s, everything has been dissolved in light but the watchers. We see only silhouettes and shadows, surrounded by iridescent aureoles of light. Somehow these figures seem simultaneously impossibly fragile and monumentally heroic.

In 1972 (*paparazzi*) a gang of photographers are thronged in a tree like monkeys, lit by harsh lights. We see them straining to catch a glimpse of their quarry, but we don't see what it is they are looking at. Yet in such works these gaps in the narrative of imagery are activated by memory. The void is filled with echoes. The nuclear flash and subsequent mushroom cloud is one of the defining images of the twentieth century. The terrorist attack at the Munich Olympics in 1972 produced a set of images that are firmly embedded in international consciousness. Danz knowingly exploits this pre-knowledge, our unconscious personal data bank of pre-existent images. We are, in a sense, primed for his paintings. He uses our readiness, our *image-familiarity*, to create an active engagement on the part of the audience. As such we are drawn in to the absences within his work.

Painters are, of course, unusually preoccupied with sight, and seeing, and the meaning of this all-encompassing activity. It is a trope that has run through Pascal Danz's work. But in the last five years it has perhaps become Danz's dominant theme. It is there in his images of rock concerts, where again, we observe the spectators – or sometimes the performers, looking out into a sea of humanity, which stares back – and in his series of negative cityscapes, the *remainings*, which make explicit the active process of visual engagement. And it is undoubtedly the primary subject of these powerful new works.

A flash of light. Heat. A dissolving world. Light and colour. A degraded image. Silence. Painted void. The radiance of a thousand flash bulbs. A point of entry.

A blind spot, also known as a *scotoma*, is an obscuration of the visual field. In medical literature the physiological blind spot, or *punctum caecum*, is the place in the field of vision that corresponds to the lack of light-detecting photoreceptor cells on the retina where the optic nerve passes through

it. Since there are no cells to detect light the corresponding part of the field of vision is not perceived. Curiously, rather than perceive a blank, the brain fills in with surrounding detail and with information from the other eye. As a result, the blind spot is there but is not normally perceived.

As always, there are other possible meanings. A 'blind spot' can also be an emotional or psychological phenomena, the object of which we are unable or unwilling to engage with. Something missed. A subject about which one is ignorant or prejudiced. A failure.

The radiance of a thousand suns. We step backwards, awed by the power unleashed above the landscape. Light and heat as material, tangible. Camera flash. Glare. Still figures. The world become indistinct. Embedded in memory. The accretion of images across a lifetime, like a coral reef.

Painting and time. Alongside an exploration of the mechanism and meaning of sight and seeing, Danz's new work presents an investigation of time in painting. Again, perhaps paradoxically, painters are preoccupied with temporality. One of the supposed superior qualities of film over paint is the way in which it can capture and represent real time. Yet painting, in part because of the way it is made – the physical actions of the artist are preserved as traces on the surface of the canvas – and in part of the way in which we look at it – slow time – introduces and embraces and even *produces* time in mysterious and compelling ways. In Danz's work we see two main strategies to explore this. Firstly, he creates sequences of images, like the frames of a film, which present an unfolding event. Secondly, he introduces a blank space, a *blind spot*, a mysterious *lacunae* or emptiness in the heart of the image, which somehow opens it out, like a cinema screen.

Cezanne's palette. Beckett's blindness. Rothko's emptiness. Possible failure. Uncanny beauty. Defective representation. Doubt (a state somewhere between belief and disbelief, involving uncertainty or distrust or lack of sureness of an alleged fact, an action, a motive, or a decision). Doubt brings into question some notion of a perceived 'reality'. Slow life. We must ask ourselves, again and again and again, what are we looking at?

Ben Tufnell
September 2009

What is noticeable is that in my collection of images almost every single one includes some kind of disturbance, whether technical (like bad printing, dust, over-exposure), formal or thematic.

Whether I paint what I see in front of me? I think it's more correct to say that I try to paint what I can't see, the gap between the depicted and the thought. To visualize what the other set of eyes has not seen or not taken notice of.



Wigwam/Vanishing Landscape, 2008

140 x 200 cm

Oil on canvas

Pascal Danz



Blind Spot 1-3, 2009
30 x 40 cm (each)
Oil on Canvas



Timewarp 2, 2009
200 x 140 cm
Oil on Canvas

Pascal Danz



Timewarp, 2009
160 x 300 cm
Oil on Canvas

The empty space in the [...] landscapes is above all a constructed one – just as the landscape in general is constructed: the painted structures are based in each case on various source images and are placed by me on the canvas like a collage, sampled and extended with invented areas.



Watching 1-3, 2009
30 x 40 cm (each)
Oil on Canvas

The art of refusal

Thomas Huyghe's whole practice actually stems from an act of refusal. Already in his first works, in the early 2000s, he was probing the media-based boundaries of painting by working on unusual grounds and in making use of fragmentary figurative iconography. The first refusal in his work, which is still present in the work today, is the refusal to conform to any classical painterly pattern of expectation.

Realising that virtuosic painting is possible, but not much of a challenge, he began to pervert his own virtuosity. Not in the manner of the Neue Wilden for example, who, in the 1980s, suddenly began to paint in a raw and naive way. Huyghe's attitude is subtler and could well be more intelligent. He uses the advantages and means offered by the medium, and does not so much wish to go counter to it, but rather to subvert it to his own ends. This is manifested most clearly in a series of works, among them the *Sun Chariots*: he paints the often laughing faces onto a ground of convex surfaces, and imposes the laws of form on them. But also in more recent works, such as the splendid painting of the terrorist Moqtada Al-Sadr "*Moqtada (Censored)*, 2009"; a similarly focused and forthright refusal can be felt.

He very consciously divides the canvas into four parts, and instead of building up the painting in a logical way, according to the appropriate principles of painting, he paints segment per segment. In this way the work not only becomes "imperfect" but the aspect of time starts to play a role. One notices, for example, that there are subtle nuances of difference in colour and form between the various segments. Moreover, by simply not painting the last quarter, he is as it were censoring his own image.

Huyghe's refusal goes beyond a purely painterly and medium-based discourse. Where in earlier works one could speak of a search for and a probing of the boundaries of painting, in recent works his dealings with these issues are much lighter.

The search and the insecurity have made way for a greater accuracy that allow the artist to also add a variety of forms and elements to his work. This does not only have as a consequence that his paintings are increasingly becoming installations, but mainly that these installations constantly engage with the reality outside of the image. Thomas Huyghe's work, in other words, is obtaining an increasingly pronounced political dimension, which is less the result of

a specific configuration than of the interplay between formal and iconographic choices.

An important element in this is the frames that he uses for his pieces. In his most recent work the frame tends to consist of beige or grey-black imitation marble, a shiny laminate that generally fits in environments dictated by a perceived lack of taste. Here too the artist is aiming at a dual effect. The frames are so prominently present and well finished, that they are attractive, despite themselves. At the same time, in all their artificiality, they are repellent.

Huyghe himself says that he is fascinated by power. How can it be that someone like Mugabe succeeds in dominating a country like Zimbabwe for years? Why is a character like Philippe Dewinter so popular? Wherein resides Madeleine Albright's might? And so on. By focusing on the face and literally painting out the inside of the mouth, the emphasis comes to lie very strongly on the eyes and the facial expression. As a viewer, you not only discover the natural charisma of such characters, but the emphasis also comes to lie on the enjoyment of power they emanate and which brought or will bring them to a fall.

The frame in those works has a double function. On the one hand they objectify the painting. You stand outside it as a viewer, or, better still, the characters become isolated from reality and get caught within the painting. Huyghe creates distance. By creating distance he at the same time facilitates insight.

His entire oeuvre functions as a mask that unmasks our illusions in a disturbing manner. He confronts us with the fragments of reality that should at the very least move us to question our own position.

Rolf Quaghebeur
September 2009



Frame #2 (with collateral damage), 2009

Mirror laminate, oilpaint, wood, iron

270 x 130 x 20 cm



Board of Control (Hillary), 2009
Oil on wood, marble laminate frame
49,5 x 36,5 x 7,5 cm
Series of 12



Board of Control (Nicolas), 2009
Oil on wood, marble laminate frame
49,5 x 36,5 x 7,5 cm
Series of 12



Madeleine (censored), 2009
Oil on wood, marble laminate frame, iron
127 x 171 x 13,7 cm



Maggie (censored), 2009
Oil on wood, marble laminate frame, iron
205 x 165 x 13,7 cm

Pascal Danz

→ BLIND SPOT

November 12 - January 9, 2010

LOCUSLUX GALLERY in association with Haunch of Venison, London

Thomas Huyghe

MY PRIVATE PROPERTY
January 14 - February 20, 2010

LOCUSLUX GALLERY



Locuslux Gallery
Oude Graanmarkt 57
Rue du Vieux Marche aux Grains
Brussels B-1000 Bruxelles Belgium

T + 32 (0) 25 12 13 11
www.locuslux.com
For route options see our website

For Locuslex questions
& editorial contributions:
info@locuslux.com

Opening hours:
wed - fri 14-19h,
sat 12-18h or by appointment

Colofon

Editorial

Loek Grootjans

Ton Homburg

Marc Strijbos

Authors

Ben Tufnell, Sr. Curator Haunch
of Venison, UK

Rolf Quaghebeur

Translation

Kate Mayne

Véronique Depiesse

Thanks to the artists

Pascal Danz

Thomas Huyghe

Photography

Tom de Visscher

Philippe de Gobert

Special thanks to

Materialise.MGX

Design

Ton Homburg (Opera)

Print

NPN drukkers

Quotes Pascal Danz:

From 'Stupid Like a Painter:

An Interview with Pascal Danz

by Ben Tufnell' in Pascal Danz:

blank out, Haunch of Venison,

Zurich, 2008

Founded by Marc Strijbos in 2008, the gallery is dedicated to exhibiting emerging artists and to helping those artists build their careers. Together with Loek Grootjans, we emphasize long-term relationships with the artists and invest in the development and promotion of their oeuvres.



Merrill Lynch

Merrill Lynch Brussels Global Wealth Management
Avenue de Tervueren 273, 1150 Brussels Tel: 02/761.95.20 Brussels_Office@ml.com

Arclinea

www.arclinea.brussels.be



Monte Rosola
www.monterosola.com

www.monterosola.com



www.espacebizarre.com

S T I L I S S I M O
FURNITURE
DADO
LIGHTING

stilissimo@skynet.be