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Abstraction, Depth – Abstraction, Soul
On the Artistic Practice of Patricia Reinhart

A painting of lavish color explosions, vibrating, rhythmically seething surfaces, streams, and eddies, seemingly extending into infinity, allows Patricia Reinhart to let her works meander across the surfaces of her canvases and occupy the spaces of their re-presentation.

The often tension-filled compositions maintain a high degree of sensuality, arising from the complex interplay of subjectivity, abstraction, and psychological depth – a process through which the artist synthesizes outer and inner categories.

With her recent Assembled Cut-Out Paintings (since 2021, first cut-out paintings since 2016), Reinhart pursues her painterly position with consistency and verve. She interrogates painting, following its materiality – flowing color, textual density – both precisely and intuitively, while foregrounding painting as an intimate, performative act, oriented to the scale of her own body. In doing so, she raises questions about the possibilities of the medium: Where can abstract painting still go? What can it draw upon? Which impulses can be taken up or extended? What can follow upon the achievements of major painters such as Lee Krasner and Joan Mitchell?

Inspired by psychoanalysis and the theory of lucid dreaming as much as by Surrealism, film history, and literature, Reinhart constructs, through the abstract language of her painting, a kind of coordinate system closely connected to the method of collage: to spatial and pictorial layering, to the principle of the image-within-the-image in her photographic self-portraits, and to her Ciné Collage, developed since 2003. These are at once records of the self and aesthetic objects, carriers of inscribed memories and artistic decisions. Patterns can be read as information, non-representational forms as structures and unconscious inscriptions – in processually generated compositions through which the artist moves and immerses herself.

In the Assembled Cut-Out Paintings, it is layers that, as paintings before the painting, multiply pictorial space. To achieve this, Reinhart cuts amorphous shapes from the canvas with utmost precision, literally operating with the scalpel on her motifs, transforming the canvas – the image support – into sculptural material, and the stretcher frame into a visible element of the pictorial object. It is as though she were turning the very interior of painting outward. The cut does not destroy the painted forms; rather, it redefines their edges.

In contrast, her glazing technique emphasizes the watery, fluid, flowing quality of color; dripping and running down become part of the composition. Reinhart virtuously combines transparent, watercolor-like passages with opaque layers in oil pastel. In this way, pictorial space expands continuously and creates sensual depth through the differentiated density of textures. The stratified side-by-side and layering of delicate and intense colors, of thinner or thicker applications of paint, traversed by drawn elements and diagrammatic markings, measure realities with the instruments of painting.

Affinities with automatisme psychique and with André Breton's words on the marvelous ("Le merveilleux est toujours beau, n'importe quel merveilleux est beau, il n'y a même que le merveilleux qui soit beau" / "The marvelous is always beautiful, everything marvelous is beautiful, indeed, only the marvelous is beautiful.") are, in Patricia Reinhart's work, a subject of analysis and staging.