

ERNA HECEY GALLERY, Luxembourg

Eugénie Paultre

More Than Earthly Ties

29.2 – 25.4 2020

Press release

Erna Hecey is delighted to host the first Eugénie Paultre solo exhibition at the gallery.

Eugénie Paultre was born in 1979 in Paris, where she currently lives and works. She studied then taught philosophy at the Sorbonne but since 2010 she has devoted herself to painting and writing. She said: “I studied philosophy for ten years to try to discover the truth of thought, the righteousness of spirit, but also, and more importantly, to try to understand why the Western world had lost its way and to discipline and reassure myself. But to no avail. The emotions were too strong. I could not hold them at bay, I had to work with them. [...] And so at the age of 30, I entered into the service of colour.”

Eugénie Paultre quickly moved away from figurative attributes and play on forms, and she reduced her compositions to the simplest possible expression: she applies colour in juxtaposed vertical bands (or “lines”). The possibilities are many: she can vary the width or successive cadences of the coloured bands, the materials (pigments, inks, oil, gouache, pastel, acrylics), the medium (mainly canvas and paper), and of course the full range of tones available and their combinations. Her work is however very far from any concept of systematic exploration, she lets herself be guided by her intuition: each painting is linked to a moment invested by the act of painting, here and now, the act of bringing out the colour in a pre-established, but not pre-existing, structure. The range of colour combinations is just as vast as the range of tones. She explores them with no preconceived rules and denies herself neither harmony nor discord. Painting, for Eugénie Paultre, is exploring “the fundamental colour dimension of existence”.

Her published works are of different types: poetic prose, journals, reflections on art, on her own practice or on other artists (Etel Adnan, Simone Fattal, Damien Hirst). But in all cases writing, for her, responds to a feeling of urgency vis-à-vis “a world that plies us with questions”, and a concern to take stock of where one is, define one’s position. Through her writing and painting Eugénie Paultre *takes a stance*, adopting an attitude that is at the same time reflective and sensitive, proving that choosing abstraction is not withdrawing from the world, that the concrete dimension of

contemplation is a means of taking action. This is clear from the booklet published for the exhibition, which combines a few paintings and two recent new texts – “*On colour*” and “*Lines*” – from which the quotes above have been taken.

Contrary to what the formal rigour and reduction of her paintings might lead us to believe, Eugénie Paultre works with no set agenda. She can do this no doubt because she practices both painting and writing. These are her battle horses, taking turns to channel her experience, sharpening each other: the way forward is open. However, amused, concerned, she recently highlighted a declaration by the British artist Bridget Riley which, in 1983, could have sounded like a provocation or an anachronism: “The potential of what is called abstract colour painting, which places particular emphasis on the interplay between colours, has barely been touched. I would expect and hope that by the year 2020 abstract painters will be extracting from this endlessly rich seam a range of exciting work which will genuinely enlarge the vocabulary of art and our perception of the world around us.”

The “*More Than Earthly Ties*” exhibition displays around 30 small paintings on paper from the total of 60 works completed in 2019.

The bilingual (French/English) booklet *Des liens plus que terrestres / More Than Earthly Ties* is the first in a series which will now accompany the gallery’s activities.

Eugénie Paultre (1979, Paris)

Recent exhibitions:

Institut français, Bratislava, 2019 (solo show)

Gandy Gallery, Bratislava, 2019 (solo show)

Colori: L’emozione dei colori nell’arte, Castello di Rivoli, Torino, 2017

Etel Adnan et les modernes, Mudam, Luxembourg, 2019

Monograph:

Eugénie Paultre. Outline, London, HENI Publishing, 2018

Published Books:

In French:

L’État actuel des choses, Paris, Éditions Al Manar, 2012; *Hiver*, Paris, Éditions Al Manar, 2013; *Nous verrons bien*, Berlin, Moon Rainbow, 2013; *En soi-même*, Paris, Éditions Al Manar, 2016; *Up. Réflexion sur l’art et la folie*, Paris, Éditions Al Manar, 2019; *Forward. Rencontre avec Hans-Ulrich Obrist*, Paris,

Manuella Éditions, 2019; *Présence des signes. Etel Adnan, Simone Fattal*, Paris, Manuella Éditions, 2019.

In English:

Winter, transl. Simone Fattal, Cole Swensen, Etel Adnan, The Post-Apollo Press, 2013; *Matter of Life. A meeting with Damien Hirst*, transl. Jérémy Robert, London, HENI Publishing, 2020 (to be published).

In German:

Winter, transl. Klaudia Ruschkowski, Hamburg, Nautilus, 2018; *Ränder. Betrachtungen über Kunst und Wahnsinn*, transl. Jorinde Reznikov, Hamburg, Nautilus, 2019.