

PARIS

STÉPHANE DAFFLON

AIR DE PARIS

Now that a rekindled interest in figurative painting has been deemed legitimate, "Something More Abstract," as Stéphane Dafflon's exhibition at Air de Paris is called, shows that abstract painting is also still alive and kicking.

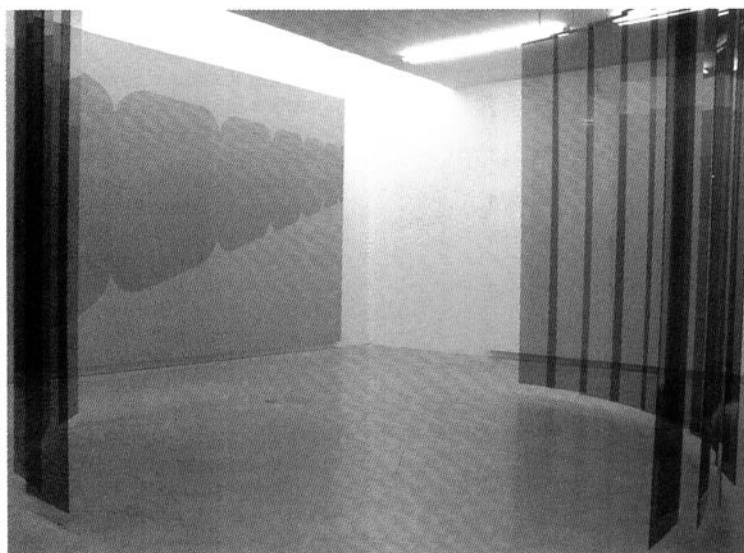
The installation and three canvases by the Swiss artist, a former pupil of John Armleder, command the space with great virtuosity: the large format of the paintings is precisely married with the height of the picture rails. Dafflon's colored motifs, perfectly realized and disconcertingly simple, maintain a precious quality of wonder. The central painting, in panorama format, gives a lighthearted view of standard pink rectangular forms with rounded corners on a lighter background. The two vertical forms diffuse an uplifting spread of four-pronged yellow stars opposite an interlaced trace of red that deceives the gaze with a subtle effect of deformation.

The pictures are enveloped by a circular installation with an open passageway composed of a dozen blue-gray translucent Plexiglas sheets, suspended from the ceiling and reaching down to the floor. Placed between the gaze of the spectator and the paintings, the architectural element transforms the reading of these as though one were wearing sunglasses; the painted space becomes streaked and the colors gain in intensity.

Dafflon's works are remarkably innovative as brilliantly humble reflections on the history of abstract painting, touching perhaps on a particularly Swiss characteristic. With a beauty that extends without spilling over into lavishness, they openly declare their status to be first and foremost a decorative one. Like a conductor, Dafflon's art, without losing its magic, focuses elliptically and equally on itself and on the panoply of forms in advertising, design, television, graphics, or even interior design. The exhibition highlights the ways in which they appear, in which they are digested, and their renaissance. The suspended installation could thus fit perfectly into the décor of a contemporary art corner in a large store, and the marks on the canvas could easily become the motifs on luxury handbags.

Charles Barachon

(Translated from French by Rosemary McKisack)



STÉPHANE DAFFLON, (from left to right) ASTO37, 2003. Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 250 cm. ASTO36, 2003. Acrylic on canvas, 250 x 250 cm. Silent Gliss, 2004. Sétacryl, metal, dimensions variable.

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