

Hannah De Corte

Faire Peinture.

'to do painting'

The way Hannah De Corte describes her own practice so eloquently yet raw and direct, evokes the glitch on which her work is situated: between various languages and reflections on artistic mediums, traditions, methodologies and gestures.

At first glance, her canvases appear to depict dreamy landscapes, not delineated by horizons or directed towards vantage points. They waft by, like freely oscillating clouds, breaths or stains. Perhaps we are overly conditioned to immediately decipher an image in the portrayed, or to consider the depicted as being representative of something else?

Upon second glance, closer this time, the wandering eye discerns dots, points, colour shades, threads, woven patterns, pictorial planes, stitchings, folds and stretchers underneath. Piercing through first impressions, the work now reveals its true essence: a meshing of materialistic manipulations in which the artist is engaged in a far-reaching exploration of the scope of painting.

The durational process required to perceive the intricacies in the work, echoes the time invested in its making. De Corte approaches painting predominantly via the canvas. She is drawn to the organic qualities of raw linen, a material which has - throughout the history of painting - subsequently been hidden underneath the painted image; exposed in avant-gardist experiments; cut up so as to state its object-hood; and unburdened itself from the stretcher to roam freely in space. A thorough understanding of these canonical references underpins the artist's practice, which nonetheless forefronts a rather bodily, meditative and intimate relationship with the material she deploys.

The fabric's weaving texture is patterned by a rhythmic interplay between hiding and revealing, where threads tumble over, under and alongside each other. Applying contained dots of colour on recurring intervals, De Corte meticulously unearths how the often disregarded surface of the painter's canvas is made. She even goes as far as to adorn these alternating points from the back of the cloth, leaving the colour to percolate to the front of the work.

Texture, structure and colour thus form the three axes along which she probes reflection on the spatial and temporal traits of canvas. She does so by inviting the viewer to stretch their gaze, taking the time and expanding the view to deconstruct, and to absorb the space and time embedded in the work. Above all, they are made by the artist close to her own body, over long stretches of time. With their organic feel, small imperfections and alluring honesty, the works by Hannah De Corte - be they subtle and small, or encapsulatingly large-scaled - nearly appear like skins that gently stroke the outside world. A comforting invitation, to do painting.

- Evelyn Simons, December 2020