

ParisCONCRET

a risky business

POCHADES

Pochade: an oil sketch executed quickly in a few brush strokes, a study showing inspired qualities but also imperfections due to speed of execution. It's only a "pochade".

Traditionally associated with representational painting, landscape, portrait or still life, the Pochades exhibited here are the abstract version of a genre long considered as minor: inconsequential pieces executed in preparation for something else, warm-up exercises as those of a pianist rehearsing his musical scales, which keep making appearances in my work between or during the elaboration of the bigger paintings. They signal a need to relate to a smaller scale, a desire for something produced quickly without too much planning or afterthoughts, for a spontaneity and intimacy absent from the larger pieces; an ironic critique of the inherent ambition and the pretention of the larger work, a need to establish a dialog between what projects itself as important because of its scale or size and what rejects and questions this very same importance.

As they developed along with the bigger size paintings of the "Opus Incertum" series, these Pochades share with them the aspect of being paintings without paint. Color is only used as a way of qualifying a surface stretched with tinted canvas purchased as is in a store. They also share with the larger paintings their "frame" sprayed directly on the wall, which anchors, separates and underlines all at the same time the wall's matrix connection to the painting.

In their approach, these geometric pieces, usually assembling a few small shaped stretchers, offer a re-reading conflating an array of abstraction's recent trends and suggest possible new horizons beyond them. Among these trends we may find hints of Rothko's Sublime - by way of the sprayed outline on the wall, of Stella's shaped paintings, of Supports/Surfaces crafty Deconstruction, of the monochrome, of minimalism's literal space, of Blinky Palermo's fabric paintings and the disappearance of paint as the medium of choice for painting, of the immediacy of New York's spray-paint based graffiti culture, and of Pop abstraction from the nineties.

This work originates in a questioning of painting's fundamental nature, of abstract painting in particular and of its capacity to condense and project itself in the future. Because of their historical, poetical and philosophical baggage, painting - and abstraction in particular, are among the most fine-tuned investigative tools we have to examine our intellectual and spiritual expectations of our times and of their cultural contradictions.

Gwenaël Kerlidou, Brooklyn, March 2014