



*J'AIMERAIS VOUS VOIR DISPARAÎTRE*

SAMUEL RICHARDOT

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I would like to see you disappear

Who then is Samuel Richardot addressing when he exhorts this "you" to disappear? To us, who reads this title as a preamble to the exhibition? I want to believe that no, let's sweep this hypothesis aside very quickly. Does he then talk to his paintings? I would like to see you disappear! Again, let's close a door and turn off the light on the "Everything must disappear" windows of the department stores, which could remind us of the dependence of artists on the art market and the vital necessity to sell their works. Let's not go down the wrong path, Samuel Richardot wants his paintings to disappear so that he can continue to paint, question himself, and push the pictorial experience further or in a few new directions. An attitude which has allowed him for ten years and his graduation from the Beaux-Arts de Paris, to develop a research without rupture and with a remarkable intelligence.

As is often the case, everything starts with a sigh and then a silence. Then an explosion. A pictorial explosion in this case, an explosion of tasks and colors. These were his first paintings, you won't see any here. But the universe is created, the *kósmos*, the ordered world as the Greeks say. A closed and balanced world, built here on the white canvas. Sometimes - often - the forms balance there, other times - more rarely - it is covered, even engulfed, under a flood of liquid colors. Painting comes in solids, in hollows, in solids, in reserves, in transparent and sedimentary layers, in curved forms of an organic nature or, on the contrary, in rigid graphic lines, and in a variety of ways that give the painting the dimension of a language with its grammar and syntax. On the white canvas therefore, whose presence and importance has increased over the years to the point of becoming a central element of his work, Samuel Richardot meticulously composes a lexicon whose forms and colors develop and evolve without ever repeating themselves, considering the immaculate surface as the silence that surrounds words, gestures, emotions, sensations, dreams, memories, because yes, Samuel Richardot's painting is a painting of the sensitive. It is even a painting that goes in search of time, a painting that, in order to be made, does not seek to conceptualize its state but on the contrary, summons the emotional memory and the sensual relationship to things. A horny page, graffiti, dew, the smell of gas, a chamois seen on a hill, the landscape scrolling behind the window of a wagon, the cry of jays, the plumage of the woodpecker, a tire track, the color of the oil, the mist, spring mornings, a wine stain ... Samuel Richardot observes, listens, smells, touches, and paints. To tell the connections that link his painting to nature and the world in general, he likes to use the metaphor of synaesthesia [1], never explicitly represented these fleeting impressions are transformed into forms, lines, and colors in an economy of means that aims to capture the essential.

Precisely the essential, a vast undertaking in which the trap would be to fall into arbitrariness and from which the painter only escapes in the search for necessity[2]. 2] To attempt an explanation,



it is interesting to linger on the example of Haiku. 3] Several parallels are to be highlighted[4]: first of all, the rigor and economy of extremely regulated and codified means in the classical formula of the Haiku, its brief form in short, forbids any lyricism. On the contrary, it is a question of concentrating the essential in a minimum of verses, three precisely of five, seven, and five syllables. In the same way Samuel Richardot seeks to purify his painting, his aim is more to remove than to add. But it is not only that, without a powerful, spiritual link to nature, to the cosmos, to the universe, Haiku loses its meaning, so it is not only a question of using the minimal form to create a work of art, but above all to become one with the subject without the "I" transgressing or disfiguring it. No distance therefore, or separation, between the haikist and what he describes. No theatricality, no romance. It is indeed the abolished distance between poetry and nature, between the poet and what he describes that interests us here in the quest for the essential, for we can see that by being refractory to the effects of style, Samuel Richardot's painting contains within it the richness of being able to be perceived as analytical and distanced while escaping it completely by the sensible. No lyricism then, but on the contrary a proven mistrust for aesthetic compromise, it is by drawing from the sensible that the right form can appear. In the logic of Haiku, nature imposes its law on the poet,[5] so it is necessary to feel, to give oneself time. Among my acquaintances, another artist told me recently: all painters should experience the countryside! It turns out that a certain number, including Samuel Richardot, know how to create the conditions for the appearance of their painting : the choice of nature as a living environment[6], the rural world and its porosity to solar and lunar time, to the rhythm of the seasons, but also the need to go back in one's own footsteps, in the landscapes of childhood, are, I believe, the signs of a quest for the essential that we find in painting, because it is precisely by being attentive to this phenomenology of time - the seasons, the memory - that the nature of the world is revealed.

Afterwards, having grasped this, the painter never stops structuring this world, mastering here, choosing to let go there. As if the painting had a life of its own. A method that reminds us of the landscape painter, who more than anyone else obeys the cycle of nature. But more than the layout of the landscape, it is the portrait that I am thinking of. Moreover, it is not insignificant to look at the formats used by Samuel Richardot, standard formats, F formats like Figure, with always identical homothetic relationships, whether they are small, medium or large. From nature, the universe, the world, to the portrait. From the general to the detailed. From the immense to the tiny. On the white of the canvas, Samuel Richardot organizes the space, arranges the forms, coordinates the global mastery with a few circumscribed hazards so that, once the painting is finished, each element appears in its place, exactly in its place. In this closed world, there is a great variety of models in perfect balance, the protruding is next to the curve, the flatness is next to the run-out, lines turn into sections. In fact, behind the appearances, from the great all to the portrait, there is only one step! Lingering on the root of the word order (cosmos), Borges



proposes a stimulating comparison in Dialogues[7]: “Did you know that the word ‘cosmetics’ has its origin in the word cosmos? The cosmos is the great order of the world, and cosmetics the small order that a person imposes on his or her face. “For the Greeks, order and arrangement or arrangement was therefore synonymous. We realize that there is indeed a link between small and great order, between the way the painter arranges the painting and the organization of the stars, between reality and its double, as Christian Bernard already mentioned in one of the first texts dedicated to the artist[8].

What is interesting in this concept of doubled reality (which is paradoxical since the double is both itself and the other, to make it clear that painting is both what it represents and itself in its own right, thus referring to external elements while being self-referential), is to ask how in a painting of the sensible - I deliberately do not say abstract - the forms of nature are transmuted into pictorial forms perfectly distant, and even apparently cut, from their referents. This can make us consider painting as the mask of nature, its doubled face, its projection on the white canvas with, in between, translations of a synesthetic order or how to paint the memory of a smell for example. We are perhaps far from trompe-l’oeil, but it is quite pleasing to let links be woven between contemporary modes of borrowing from reality, such as extracting from its context and reproducing a movement, for example, which Samuel Richardot was able to do in specific cases by taking up elements of the graffiti artist’s gesticulation[9], and the old pictorial tradition of Imitatione, which according to Cesare Ripa[10] was the figurative representation of abstract ideas. Many artists have taken these paths back and forth! In the end, painting remains painting, from filiations to ruptures, it evolves, regenerates itself, and as long as the painter remains sensitive to the sensitive, it renews itself unceasingly. This is also and simply what Samuel Richardot shows us.

1] Synesthesia is a neurological phenomenon by which two or more senses are associated.

2] Yves Michaud defines bad abstract painting as that of gratuitousness. “If it wants to be truly abstract, it must be closed in on itself, perfectly self-referential. For all that, there is no room for arbitrary no-one. But it is indeed the risk of arbitrariness and gratuitousness that awaits a painting that is detached from all anchoring and that no longer has to be true. Bad abstract painting is generally recognizable by such gratuitousness, especially by the forms that appear in it: Why must there be four triangles here and not five? Why should there be four triangles here and not five? Why should they be arranged like this? Why a line there? Why not something else?

Yves Michaux in Bernard Piffaretti et alii, Si vous avez manqué la première partie... Fortune critique, writings and interviews, 1982-2007. Collection mamco. Les presses du réel - 2008.

3] A connection whose paternity goes back to Emmanuel Latreille, Director of the FRAC



Languedoc Roussillon and which I found interesting to develop here.

4] Here I draw on a text on Michel Onfray's Haiku published in his book Cosmos under the title "L'expérience poétique du monde" (The Poetic Experience of the World) - Flammarion - 2015.

5] ibid 3 p 390

6] Samuel Richardot chose to live in Auvergne, in the Cantal, his native region.

7] Dialogues, Osvaldo Ferrari, Jorge Luis Borges, Agora editions, 2012.

8] Catalogue of the November exhibition of the laureates in Vitry, Ville de Vitry sur Seine, 2006.

9] I am thinking of paintings in which certain elements are treated with spray paint in ample and undulating gestures.

10] Scholar and lover of 16th century Italian art, author of the Iconologia overo Descrittione dell'Imagini universali), collection of allegories - 1593.



*“Already tried. Already failed. It doesn’t matter. Try again. Failed again. Fail better. ”*

*These magnificent words by Samuel Beckett - taken from Cap au pire (1991) - could compose the motto of Samuel Richardot, who claims to be Sigmar Polke but also Bernard Piffaretti. After practicing his medium in terms of expressionist figuration, he purified the paint on his canvas sometimes to the point of near absence. Today the artist mixes his studio work with his meditative practice to think of his painting in terms of incompleteness and imperfection as language can be. He almost always paints horizontally, often using stencils, bombs, juices and lets the colors decant at different degrees of liquidity, sometimes in multi-layers. A very slow process of sedimentation that allows him to find an unintentional form in an intentional gesture.*

*“I wish to bring the viewer to ask himself questions about what appears on the canvas. If there were a challenge, it would be to stay on a very tight line between the identification of things and the viewer’s experience.*

*Alain Berland (excerpt from Mouvement n°78)*

*Samuel Richardot was born in 1982 and lives in Paris and Auvergne. He develops a work of painting built from individual and collective experiences, and cultivates a close link with the subtle manifestations of nature. It is through seemingly innocuous gestures, the experience of the present moment and happy coincidences that he weaves a weft with extensible contours.*

*He is currently participating in the exhibition Se souvenir des belles choses at the Mrac in Sérignan and has recently participated in the exhibitions Ligne aveugle at the isba in Besançon, Etre-Chose at the Centre international d’art et du paysage in Vassivière and Natura Lapsa at the Confort Moderne in Poitiers. His work is present in various public and private collections in France and abroad.*