

GALERIE

HUBERT

WINTER

MARCIA HAFIF

Opening: March 30, 2023, 6–9pm

March 31 – May 6, 2023

We explained how one property of a surface is bound up with the outline. We must now speak of the other property of a surface, which, if I might put it this way, is like a skin stretched over the whole extent of the surface.

—Alberti, *De Pictura*, I.4

Galerie Hubert Winter is pleased to present an exhibition specifically dedicated to works from Marcia Hafif's *Acrylic Paintings* series from 1972. This is the first time the works are on view again since they were last presented in the mid-1970s at the gallery of Ileana Sonnabend in New York.

Moving from Rome to New York in 1971 also marked the end for her previous way of painting. Works from the years 1961–1969, subsumed as the *Italian Paintings* were characterized by bilaterally symmetrical, brightly colored shapes. Two of these works—*Nr. 52* and *56*—are also on view in the exhibition, to make the transition from pre-70s to later works traceable.

*On January 1, 1972 I took this step eliminating the juxtaposition of colors in order to make a painting which uses the methods and materials of traditional painting, but which was not really a painting in the usual sense. In this way I hoped to find a new image, and a new meaning for painting. It was a situation of coming to the end of painting and yet being confronted with the need to start again.*¹

However, at the new beginning of her painting, there are drawings—the series *Pencil on Paper*—short vertical markings, starting at the top left, working diagonally downwards to end at the bottom right, these were the criteria of the process, the repetition of which resulted in manifold patterns. These drawings marked the start of the so-called *Inventory*—her systemic exploration and deconstruction of painterly possibilities, spanning five decades and more than 20 series.

The *Acrylic Paintings*² represent the second series of the *Inventory* and for the first time, after the caesura in the oeuvre³, Marcia Hafif returned to painting. Acrylic paint on canvas—since she had it available at the moment, as she said herself⁴—applied in vertical strokes, in the same procedure as in the drawings. Fourteen colors were chosen to represent a standard palette: *Ultramarine Blue*, *Cadmium Yellow Medium*, *Cadmium Orange*, *Bocour Green*, *Venetian Red* and *Raw Sienna* are on display in the exhibition. Each color was applied in vertical strokes that covered the entire front. Apart from a border around the edges—a unique feature of this series in the entire work of Marcia Hafif. The naked canvas that these works reveal, show us already that Marcia Hafif's work does not inherently represent monochrome painting, but rather that it is a consequence of her approach.

Material, paint application, image support, format, and installation result in an aesthetic or internal ethic. This manifests an inherent logic from which necessarily emerges a set of values associated with the material in question. Rather than altering the material to suit one's needs, it is left largely unchanged, and art is drawn from it. The artist works within the (chosen) givens of the materials.

I felt, however, that I was a painter and that painting was still what I wanted to do. (Marcia Hafif)

¹ Marcia Hafif, *Why Paint*, 1989. (URL: <https://www.marcihafif.com/whypaint.html>; last access: March 17, 2023)

² The *Acrylic Paintings* series is not to be confused with the *Acrylic Glaze Paintings* series created around 1994.

³ Marcia Hafif's article *Beginning Again*, published in 1978, is worth reading about this upheaval in the work. She began to write the article in 1973 and it accompanied the beginning of the inventory, but was only published in 1978 in *Artforum* (URL: <http://www.marcihafif.com/beginning.html>; last access March 17, 2023).

⁴ Marcia Hafif, *Inventory Paintings*. (URL: <http://www.marcihafif.com/inventory/ap.html>; last accessed March 17, 2023)

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