

The fragment desire.

In this new Paris exhibition with the DS Galerie, Raphaël-Bachir Osman is showing for the first time a body of paintings focusing mainly on representations of the human body. It's a change of theme in a body of work that until now has tended to focus on subjects taken from everyday, banal reality : plates, ping-pong rackets, sausages, gingham tablecloths, pastry icing and chocolate bars. It's an evolution in which we find, however, what already made his work so distinctive : a certain sense of the derisory and the equivocal, combined with a taste for still life, where the subject becomes a pretext for the joyful pleasure of painting.

In this group of recent paintings, Raphaël-Bachir Osman presents pieces of the body. Back, breast, mouth, moustache, small of the back, torso, shoulder, mole. Bodies that have been seen somewhere in real life or in a museum. Real or fictional. Whether it's a relative or a lover, a sculpture or an old painting, it doesn't matter. They have awakened a desire to paint, that's what matters. Raphaël-Bachir Osman's paintings never give an overall view of these bodies. Perhaps for fear of seeing these figures confined to the centre of a painting. To see them floating in a space, constrained between a foreground and a background. Perhaps out of a desire to keep these figures entirely alive. Free. Breathing. Completely open in form and meaning.

In Raphaël-Bachir Osman's paintings, there is never any question of a precise identity. The bodies depicted can be your body, my body or someone else's body. Anonymous. Just as they can be figurative motifs or abstractions. Tight framing. Fragmented perception. Interpretation eludes us. The smallness of the format invites us to bring our noses as close to the canvas as possible. Just to get a better look. And what we see first and foremost is a delicious piece of painting. What we see is the way in which the artist greedily declines the supports, the tools and the ways of doing things. A taste for the flesh of paint. That of oil. On wood, hemp or linen. Applied with tenderness and suppleness like a caress, or pushed hard. A play on renderings and textures where the skin of the paint, its colour, its grain, its smooth or grainy flesh, becomes a metaphor for the skin of the model. And vice versa. The desire for the body and the desire for paint merged. The body at work is also revealed in a more abstract way in the paintings entitled "Soapy work" or "Joy of painting": embodiments of the joy of gesture and the coloured strata that make up the memory of the studio.

Raphaël-Bachir Osman's painting is clearly part of a history of fragments. Of detail. A history of a modernity that has developed from the nineteenth century to the present day, restoring the foundations of representation in painting in the face of a changing world. A modernity that raises the question of the painted image afterwards. After the wars and the tragic fragmentation of humanities. After photography and its

perception through zooms and fragments. After industrialisation. After globalisation. After computers and the Internet. Absorbing these changes, modern painting has rethought the image of the world and humans through an aesthetic of the heterogeneous and the fragmentary. Raphaël-Bachir Osman's work is part of this history of modernity. These body parts, which owe something to close-up, are no doubt a response to a contemporary world of unlimited flux, giving us an increasingly fragmented perception of reality. This fragmentation undoubtedly also has something to do with memory. Giving shape to the fantasy box that makes up our psyche, where memories are always mixed together in bits and pieces.

Keeping alive in paint the things and people we have longed for. Raphaël-Bachir Osman tackles this vast, romantic quest with the energy of his youth. There is no grandiloquence or pathos in his painting. Rather, there is something between fascination and distance. It's a way of approaching reality from a different angle, with a touch of humour and fragility. A bit like a child looking at the world hidden under a table or through a keyhole. Raphaël-Bachir Osman's paintings are both light-hearted and profound, thanks to their small format. To paint a nude as beautiful and present as those found in the classics. But on a tiny piece of fabric, left in its raw state. Like painting the beauty of the sky on a ping-pong racket. There's a touching attempt at ambivalence here. A tenderness towards the little things that surround us. A derisory desire to preserve fragile little things. Tiny pieces of eternity that you can carry under your arm, everywhere with you.