

Philippe Decrauzat, 24 paintings, 2016

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Paintings and installation.

“Let a room be made as dark as possible; let there be a circular opening in the window shutter about three inches in diameter, which may be closed or not at pleasure. (...) The hole being then closed, let (spectator) look towards the darkest part of the room; a circular image will now be seen to float before him. The middle of the circle will appear bright, colourless, or somewhat yellow, but the border will at the same moment appear red.” _ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “Dazzling Colourless objects, 40”, *Theory of Colours*, John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1840, p.16.

Philippe Decrauzat here provides a twofold conception, in the form of a series of painted canvases within an architectural installation. The paintings as a whole bring to mind Blinky Palermo’s sequence *Times of the Day* (1975). The use of found objects, pieces leant on walls, the echoing of architectural motifs and wall-painting are all procedures which Lynn Cook has assembled under the notion of “porosity”, to highlight the way Blinky Palermo has torn abstract painting away from any dogma of autonomy, and reveal its material and spatial nature. This is the permeability that Philippe Decrauzat has been exploring in his own way for a good fifteen years, both formally and conceptually. The first works bring out the edges of the painting and the space in which it is exhibited, with the illusion of a light source coming from the centre of the pictorial composition, or else a shaped canvas, thus seemingly suggesting a highly illusionary motif. Throughout his pictures, installations and films Philippe Decrauzat has conceived a form of painting extended up to the scale of the exhibition space, as well as to cultural productions (cinema, music) which determine the way it is perceived. The 24 paintings on show combine the colours red and green. Their composition evokes a simple signalling system, in particular those used on railways or canals, but their proportions are different. They are made up of two rectangles, one red and one green, in a 4/3 format unified by their darkening colours. Across a sequence of 24 images, here Philippe Decrauzat is articulating intervals, continuations and movement, along with that of the visitors, as in the grey optic veil enveloping each canvas.

The installation consists of a quadrangular architecture, with an empty space separating the floor from the walls. In the centre, a volume subtracted from the floor shows the height of a raised platform, which the visitors can use. On the walls, the series of paintings is interrupted by an opening. This centred architectural construction brings to mind Barker’s panorama (1787) or Daguerre’s diorama (1822), two illusionary conceptions, combining theatre and painting. In it, Philippe Decrauzat stages a merry-go-round, whose 24 canvases pass us by like flashes. 24 pulsations like the images of the zoetrope (1834), the famous drum which created the illusion of a moving picture. While Philippe Decrauzat’s installation evokes proto-cinematographic devices, its opening recalls the *camera obscura*, as used by Goethe to demonstrate the principle of retinal retention and embodied perception. Jonathan Crary, who has also studied such subjective visions combining physiological factors and external data, has shown up the recent transformations in attention spans, caused by new technologies. In the era of universal, 24/7 connectivity, Philippe Decrauzat offers the experience of an architectural animation in which painting is made to last for one decelerated second.