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EUROSTARZ

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What is the present moment if not an accumulation of the past and the origin of the multiple possibilities in the future? What if we challenged the injunction to “live in the present moment”? If we took the time to look back, to settle in, to infuse and diffuse, to see and translate, and go beyond.

As John Berger tells us, “it is seeing that establishes our place in the surrounding world”. We can understand this as what we see is tinted by what we know and what we believe. In this exhibition, the seven painters seem to invite us to see more clearly, to embrace the submersion of reality, creating protocols of seeing the world around us. Through various investigatory processes, they reveal the complex and anachronic weaving of the present moment.

Gleaning, collecting, layering, accumulating and collating signifiers, images, matter and materials become ways to tackle the profusion of contemporary society. These fragments of the present are then metabolised through compression, layering or intuition in order to create new fiction-realities, unique to the subjectiveness of each artist. Such protocols of seeing go beyond merely translating the present but rather they offer opportunities to reimagine individual and collective cultural certainties. Agnes Varda in her documentary *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse* has already set the premises of gleaning ownerless objects as a way to interrogate the opulence of our societies.

As a strategic port in Europe, Antwerp is a symbol of such coexistence of people, elements, space and time. Since the wool trade in the Middle Ages, to the golden ages of the 16th century when the city was a key point for commerce, Antwerp remains nowadays a meeting hub for Europeans and European creativity. It is a place of interconnectedness, richness and openness, creating at a city scale the accumulation of elements and phenomena constructing the present moment.

Arguably, the amount of information fed through reality can induce choking, cluttering, confusion but this collation of matter can also be envisioned as true freedom. Through such an all-encompassing protocol of seeing, the present is rendered more transparent, authentic. Past, present and future become entangled allowing the painters of this exhibition to invest the liminal gap in between space and time. As introduced by Deleuze, this in-betweenness creates some breathing space to move away from pre-conceived ideas and fixed constructs such as genre, taste, class and political beliefs.

This constructed constellation of the present is constantly in transformation. Knowing can then only be understood as exploring, investigating, nourishing an ever-ending mutation. We are contaminated by the context we live in and this might be the only way to safeguard our freedom, to indulge in the transformation, and become masters of our own fate. This

exhibition is an invitation to escape the contemporary oppressive and conformist context through developing an agility to transform and find ways out. The painters enable us to see the present as an entanglement of all time which we are passing through all at once, reality becomes a vast compilation of matter with agency which we can investigate to find liminal spaces within which we can freely evolve.

Ambre Panhard