

Alain Séchas last showed his work at Galerie Chantal Crousel in 2009, startling us with a set of acrylics on papier marouflé (paper mounted on canvas), interlacing colors, curves, and splatters. The titles he gave to the paintings compelled the viewer to seek out analogies, thereby establishing a dialogue between the viewer and the piece.

The following year, the artist began working with oil directly on canvas, purifying his forms and intensifying the colors. A group of untitled, numbered paintings were shown at the Consortium in Dijon in 2011. These works with a curve or curl in the foreground, structuring the canvas, standing out from a highly reworked background, delicately tinted in one or several shades, imparting an overwhelming impression of lightness and freedom.

At his current show at Galerie Chantal Crousel, Alain Séchas presents a selection of recent works: large oils on canvas as well as smaller oils and pastels on paper. The colors are frank, directly squeezed from the tube. A firm black line – a central, vertical statement – dominates the composition. This brush stroke is no longer set off from the background, but integrated into the painting. On the periphery of the canvas, a new, elliptical element suggests a way out, an opening onto the space. The oils and pastels on paper, hanging in the gallery wings, adopt the same approach. Each piece offers a fully formed, autonomous universe.

Is the artist putting his past behind him? No, the continuity is undeniable. True, Alain Séchas is expressing himself differently, with different forms, but the new works are an outgrowth of his earlier, figurative paintings. The only thing missing is figuration. The same untrammelled movement, the same pleasure in painting come through. In his use of color, Séchas delights in astonishing our senses, in sharpening our awareness. “Just as I took possession of the lithe, mute-faced cat-men and of flirtatious Martian women, whose spiraling movements I arrested in a comical or moving way, I am taking possession of vertical canvas stretchers, oil paints, brushes, and strokes.” (From an interview with Alain Séchas published in the journal *Association Cause Freudienne*, 2012)

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