

For almost fifteen years now, Stéphane Dafflon has been building up a body of work of the first rank, marked by an originality that suggests an underlying elusiveness: at no point do his elegant geometrical abstractions defer to an unambiguous compositional principle. Borrowings, optical upsettings, the site specific, the index, the sample – all no sooner evoked than revoked. His titles admit of no superfluous interpretation, bear no hidden meaning: they simply state the medium and a number: AST, acrylique sur toile (acrylic on canvas); PM, peinture murale (wall painting); SAI, sculpture sur acier inoxydable (stainless steel sculpture), etc.

This artist summons his viewer as much to a rediscovery of the venue as to a perceiving of autonomous forms. Just as Airless, his first exhibition at Air de Paris (2000) brought his personal physical touch to bear on the actual exhibition space, this new show will see him applying his range of slender lines to both canvases and walls. Liberated from the streamlined design shapes they may have been borrowed from, these lines sometimes follow the edges of his stretchers, divide up the walls and redraw their corners. Space is no longer just to be traversed, but also to be displaced, vectored, transferred.

This exhibition will be a chance to observe the way Dafflon's practice is rooted in shifts, while, incidentally, embracing all the operations already mentioned – none of which, alone, would exhaust its complexity: shifts of format (stretcher size governed by the size of the passages), of colour (the tones of the canvases and the wall paintings reflecting two contradictory movements) and of placement (according to the transfers effected).

The upshot being that Stéphane Dafflon, rather than bothering about reacting to art theory, seems – in an act of defiance – to have taken literally the taggers who wrote on the gallery facade, "Easy to understand but complicated to do?" Don't bet on it, though.

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