

In *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, Roland Barthes, drawing on Freud, describes the "particular sensibility of the amorous subject" as a skinless condition: "I am a mass of irritable substance. I have no skin (except for caresses)." 1

Leda Bourgogne seems to be working with the awareness that everything which inscribes itself into the visual plane or into the exhibition space is painfully revealing of something, - Barthes calls this ,exquisite points' – an idea, a desire, an emotion that is exhibited publicly in a somehow naked state.

Her works unfold along these lines as an interplay of action – experienced as injury and disturbance from the very beginning – and care, a reparation which does not erase the previous action but curiously underlines and confirms it.

To a degree, this method resembles the relationship between the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position as described by Melanie Klein and Wilfred Bion. While the paranoid-schizoid position directs aggressive and exploitative impulses towards a fragmented, split object, the depressive position expresses love, guilt and a desire for compensation towards an object which is recognised as ,whole' and ambivalent.

In this sense, Bourgogne's works are marked with traces of hatred and care in relation to the object, which might well be understood as art itself. Entities emerge, bearing witness to an integrative power. They succeed against all odds, on the verge of collapse, lacking support and in unstable conditions.

The prominent sensibility of the paintings which defy the distinction between painting and sculpture becomes evident first and foremost in the choice of materials that serve as their backgrounds: instead of a frosty canvas, we see soft fabrics such as jersey and velvet but also latex which comes especially close to resembling human skin.

The idea of the painting having a skin or a body is omnipresent in Bourgogne's works, also in the sense of clothes as a second skin. This skin is subject to diverse kinds of attacks: it is partially burnt with *eau de javel*, it is cut, painted or fortified with additional pieces of cloth and fabric. Such interventions break down the integrity of the skin. The artist herself thus becomes *skinless* through the act of exhibiting. In *Skinless*, Leda Bourgogne uses evidence of devastation to stage a kind of *Thriller*.

In a second, "apologetic" step, the aforementioned negations are sewn back together again, glued or even kissed (proof of which are unmistakeable traces of lipstick). The aspect of dressing also comes

to play a role here - a kind of amicable impulse. Leda Bourgogne takes up ideas from informal art, arte povera, tachism, feminist theory and psychoanalysis. However, these dialogues are interrupted again and again, for the sake of a quasi-haptic realm of experience, a dialogue of bodies, which produces a particular lyricism contained within the works. Materials and textures develop their own language.

The dichotomy of negation and affirmation, rejection and careful resumption is set in a dreamy web of harm and reconciliation. Hereby, Bourgogne succeeds in releasing an internally divided but patched up life in her works. This is often humorously expressed in a sort of dignity of things, an affirmation of the incomplete, the fragile and desirous: Canvasses buckled up with belts claim quasi-personal integrity and internal coherence for themselves; even if this coherence becomes manifest in the mechanics of contradictions.

Bourgogne's *Chewing Gum-Poems* - gum applied to the gallery floor - have been chewed by the artist over the past weeks. Like speech bubbles, they transport the text of short poems, curiously reconnecting mouth and word and at the same time evoking coolness and exhausting bruxism. Paintings explore themselves haptically or they wait, vampire-like, for an object of desire. All the while, they float with an air of self-sufficiency in strange and atmospheric apparitions. Former CD racks that today have lost their function, the *Backbone-CD-sculpture* ready-mades stand erect, resembling deformed spines which have cut their connection to the brain and are now taking up a snake-like dance of seduction.

While walking through doors in the exhibition space, visitors are touched, brushstroke-like, by bits and pieces of clothing that were worn by the artist on the streets of Berlin and Frankfurt until recently. Bourgogne's works transport finely a tuned aesthetic of tactility: the lyricism of her paintings which speaks for itself. But additionally, one can say that Bourgogne also visualises thought- and learning processes which are not restricted to the act of creating art. Instead, they depict something akin to a mental life which oscillates between disintegration and integration.

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1 Roland Barthes: *Fragmente einer Sprache der Liebe*. Frankfurt am Main 2015, p. 125.

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