

De-pict the landscape

On the canvas, something is woven and seems to freeze in this birth. The painter's brushes rub brown, greenish and azure color juices as if to lay down the premises of an earth and a sky, of a vegetal at last, this living tension which seems animated by the desire to join this here below and this beyond. The silhouettes of a landscape begin to take shape and freeze in the outline of forms brushed in the material which remains light and translucent. On certain canvases, massive architectures rise up but seem to be already heading towards ruin: in the material of their plaster, lives a spectral sheet of plants, still.

Between the dawn and the ruin of the figures, in the middle of this moving landscape, the eye sometimes finds refuge in the firm matter of a motif pushed to the detail, to the completion, by the point of a meticulous brush. This foveal island recounts to the eye the contours of a familiar story. Reassured, the eye can, for a moment, fail there, cling to it before remembering that this paradisiacal islet is made of the same material as the underneath from which it emerges and which dominates the canvas: a worrying uncertainty.

In the body of the landscape, we can make out a translucent veil which we do not know if it is the trace of a memory of the place or a premonition; in the body of the painting, of this same veil, we do not know if it is the remainder of the ghostly image of the old project of a painting finally abandoned, or if, on the contrary, it is the beginning of a work which comes to supplant what is already there. Disturbed, the eye no longer knows if it is witnessing the birth or the evanescence of the landscape, a painting in the process of being made or unmade. This double doubt, shakes the reassuring certainties of an eye which sees to be henceforth called to see again, to perceive the backside of the decoration; of a decoration that the brushes of the painter work to dismount.

In vain, the pavement of a perspective attempts to order in layers a vision of the world, to encircle its organicity by enclosing a plant which, soon, overflows it. The painter undoes these strategies (of power) by letting the traces of a drawing emerge; by revealing his artifices, he seeks, by the color and the brush, to ascend the pictorial order: by the erosion of the layers, by the erasure of a matter, by the smears in thin sheets. The plasticity that the artist raises, one stratum after the other, is made of the same matter as the first layers that constitute the outline of the landscape of the ancients, - and that was also named, the underside of the painting. This archaeology of the pictorial surface is also the one that excavates the landscape and its history, by bringing to light what underlies it, what is buried there, underneath.

The experience of the landscape to which the painter invites us is not that of the serene contemplation of a picturesque piece of the horizon. History has accustomed us to it: comfortably posted on the summits of the world, we hold it all with our eyes, as far as the eye can see. To the point of blindness, perhaps, of believing that we are no longer men, but gods. The history of painting, of representations and their conquest of the perceived world also tells of this dream of power reborn: to contain the world within the frame of a window; to trace and retrace in vanishing lines its excess, to put it on the tile and to seize the least fragment of it. To dominate again.

The picturesque of the landscape, we have also sought it elsewhere. Because the fallen being wants to find his lost paradise. We place then in the horizon, as a prayer, an East,

the mount Ararat of an Armenia, a promised land or the dream of a terra incognita... This promised landscape, we square the expanses, we trace the parcels, the borders; we relate the exotic contours, we take the living from it, we transplant it, we recreate it for ourselves, under greenhouses. No, it is not this experience of the landscape that the artist seems to paint, but what lies there, underneath, its silent mechanisms or the vanity of the power of conquest.

By setting in motion the peaks by which the conquering eye wants to possess the world and its horizons, the visions of landscapes of Yann Lacroix invite us to another posture. By opening the landscape to its foundations, to its genesis, by allowing us to cross the strata that compose its memory, that make its history, the painter brings us to the vertiginous posture of a look that, in what he sees, perceives what it was before us, what it will be, after us.

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