

Of incompleteness

More than a traditional theme that he would work to develop in his painting, Amine Inoubli builds his pictorial universe as he paints. His starting point is a collection of visual “coups de cœur”, a sort of walk for the eye, that settles on trivial things in the immediate environment; things that go unnoticed by other people. This selective approach breaks down reality into sequences and selects a few elements of obvious banality; Amine does not establish a hierarchy in his vision of reality. Everything is good to take, if it arouses in him an artistic desire: a bus-station signpost lacking verticality, a string of telephone cables hanging on a rope, a mattress ending its life on a street corner, a fragment of a wall under construction, a builder at rest leaning on his shovel, a fragment of a woman seen from the back, and here and there a fly or other insect captured in its flight... His philosophy, his leitmotiv, is generalized precariousness, in all areas that touch on the human: our lives, our feelings, our health, our environment, our destinies... a perspective in which humans have the same status as the rest of the elements in the universe. This awareness, which he developed early on, that everything is “in suspense” (hence the title of his exhibition) is the only certainty he claims when questioned about the subjects he tackles in his work.

Amine works in series. Once he plans to portray a scene on a canvas, one of the composition's elements escapes the whole and becomes the subject of a new project, migrating to another painting. This brings him back to the essentials, namely “ordinary things” taken for themselves, stripped, isolated, waiting (?). But while it's not always easy to take a step back, it's often a source of innovation. In certain works in progress, for example, parts that have already been placed prove to be irremovable, refusing to leave the scene to be reborn in a different way on a new surface. He keeps them as traces where they have taken root, giving them an uncertain presence and casting doubt on the meaning of the work as a whole. We don't know whether the work is finished or in hold. But he knows.

A. Inoubli was in the orbit of “serious” scientific studies, which he successfully pursued. But the happiness he had felt drawing since childhood was not to be found in this conventional career. It was in search of this original happiness, which he had not lost the taste for, that he branched out into an artistic career - with no guarantees. Although he had been drawing since he was a child, it was a little over a decade ago that he began to paint, with obvious mastery and great accuracy in his rendering of reality.

When we first approach Amine's work, we are struck by the emptiness that pervades his paintings. For him, nature doesn't abhor a vacuum. Perhaps not having studied art, he escapes the fear of the blank canvas, which he approaches with confidence, serenity, and sometimes detachment; knowing perhaps that it will always be in suspension, whatever he does. Just as he was not the disciple of a “master painter” who taught him the rules of visual composition, he is not averse to launching himself into the void, often without safeguards. Alone with himself.

In a world cluttered with signs of all kinds, from which it is difficult to escape, emptiness is no longer perceived in a negative light, as it was in Western painting (which continues to constitute our referent).

It is true that the void has been at the center of a conceptual questioning. With Yves Klein and his exhibition “du vide” (Emptiness), inaugurated in 1957, Western artists began to experiment with the void from a perspective of institutional critique. A revival of interest in the void in the early 2000s renewed the question of the disappearance of the artwork. This is not the case with Amine, who is far from being a conceptual artist, and presents us with a set of concrete, palpable works, where materiality and craft are of manifest importance and presence.

The stripped-down compositions of Amine Inoubli, who has made incompleteness an essential and intuitive component of the aesthetic balance of his paintings, force us to focus on a limited number of elements (or even just one) each time, giving us wide breathing spaces and opportunities for meditation.

While he is not averse to revealing the process behind his work, the fact remains that his paintings do not tell a story. Its emptiness is experienced as potential, where anything can happen, even if, in the eyes of the storytelling-accustomed viewer, nothing does.

This nothingness, which stands for itself and is claimed by the artist, is not experienced in the mode of lack or absence. Nevertheless, working on nothing, painting nothing, or painting very little, requires long hours of work.

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