



To Paint is To Love Again

Curated by Olivier Zahm

January 18 – 28, 2020

Paintings are everywhere on Instagram. They circulate freely outside the control of the market, though they endure the censorship of social networks. Instagram is the universal exhibition of today – the Painting Salon of the 2020s. This is where I see more new paintings than I see in the galleries. This is where I discover more new artists and insensibly follow them, without even thinking, and then get off so easily.

Now, the idea is to restore and translate something of my digital experience on Instagram in an art gallery format. It's a different kind of exhibition experience. But I ask myself, is the gallery transference interesting? Will a group show of such works hold up? Can we exhibit artists without knowing who they are? Or without first seeing their work in the flesh? What can I even say about this recent mutation of taste in narrative, pictorial, eclecticism...a sense of taste that, for me, includes sexual, fetishistic and maybe neo-surrealistic tendencies?

A theoretical question also arises: What's painting even doing on Instagram?

First, let me say that a painting on Instagram is just an image. It's a simulacrum, an image of an image, even a non-image or anti-image. A painting does not reproduce reality, nor does it duplicate it, and the image of a painting does not reproduce or duplicate a painting's physical reality. A painting is a world apart. A world of shadows and lights. A mystery of surface and depth. An enigmatic mixture of colored matter and sensation. A painting stands in opposition to the digital experience of images that can be consumed *en masse*. Yet the image of a painting on a phone screen slows down my typically speedy, one-after-another consumption of images. The image of a painting often intrigues and even surprises me. Some linger in my memory, and a few more works by the same artist can deepen what began as a fragile and vague emotion. Unlike endlessly scrolled images, the digital image of a painting makes me think. It can even block the flow of thousands of images even as it too is carried off in the digital current. It stays because another kind of desire is played through it.

The images that cross in front of us, that absorb and consume us, embody a new form of global forgetfulness and contemporary amnesia. In the end, it's a sadomasochistic suffering that we inflict on ourselves in war with images. Love may reside in the social network on the side of paintings. A single painting, in the midst of the seemingly intimate torment, is like a new beginning: *to paint is to love again*.



My desire to make an exhibition of Instagram paintings begins with what Instagram does to paintings. Instagram returns to a painting what belongs to it. This is neither its decorative value, market value nor spiritual value, but rather its symbolic exchange of value. Isn't that basically what Instagram tries to actualize or make us dream about: reinventing symbolic exchange? In the social and digital arena, where images of the world can defeat the world, paintings actualize a real connection to and between us.

Text by Olivier Zahm

Trey Abdella
Rita Ackermann
Adam Alessi
Alphachanneling
Joe Andoe
Vanessa Beecroft
Judith Bernstein
Dike Blair
Maurizio Bongiovanni
Molly Bounds
Brianna Rose Brooks
Jean-Philippe Delhomme
Joshua Dildine
Urs Fischer
Evita Flores
Hell Gette
Luca Giovagnoli
Jenna Gribbon
Michael Kagan
Ralf Kokke
Becky Kolsrud
Mike Kuchar
LETO
Malcolm Liepke
Paul McCarthy
Rebecca Ness
Marika Thunder Nuss
Ariana Papademetropoulos
Raymond Pettibon

Cindy Phenix
Brad Phillips
Lauren Quin
Rene Ricard
Gideon Rubin
Gus Van Sant
André Saraiva
Jim Shaw
Peter Shire
Jansson Stenger
Alison Elizabeth Taylor
Mark Tennant
Amanda Wall
Anna Weyant
Guy Yanai
Heijin Yoo