

Music?

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in catalogue *Twist of Fate*, Artothèque et Erba Caen, 2001

translation N. Lithwick

*(...) Every herb makes its herb and every tree its fruit
But the fruit is never too much abreast the tree
And always reformed. No shade or old age
The thing born knows not the end
One can't get lost in the great closed scheme (...)
Pierre-Jean Jouve*

First there is a yes and a no, at the same time, a contradiction without any possible synthesis. We remain hovering between two realities, at a point where two opposing motions can be seen. Strangely, they do not give way to conflict, but rather initiate a construction that is all the more solid for setting itself up against threats of disintegration.

Gilgian Gelzer paints around this tension, which does not indulge in the obvious or the theatrical, but in what is complex and secret in relations between shapes. One's gaze must wander slowly, and experience painting as a well of time.

The first outcome of this material and mental elaboration, inferring duration, involves the spectator's need to inhabit the painting. To get to know it, he has to stroll through, and to be on easygoing terms, occupied by it and occupying it as a presence, pervious to its space, i. e. propelled by its entwining.

Gilgian Gelzer's painting does not entail bewitchment at a glance; it is first of all about embracing. What is the nature of a shape that, linked to another, surrounds or penetrates it? The underlying experience of Gilgian Gelzer's painting consists of this grip – but what grip do we see? As his drawings point out, a shape both rigid and limp overtakes the surface. It sets forth its limits and yet simultaneously pours out and runs over its supposed surface. This expansion does not stem from its sole motion in a universe where it would rule. Right away it encounters an opposing shape, sparked by the same principle. Both entities touch and then fit into each other. They embrace, form a figure that moves towards a new link, then another... and another... until the canvas gets covered, and moreover, until an "all over", interrupted by the frame, offers a glimpse through this beyond, of a question – not a question of the painting's constitution, but rather of its "anima". This gives rise to the painting, but only once it creates the shape's mode of existence, which is the consciousness of matter.

Take note that each shape is autonomous. It can exist on its own, through its identity and independence. Similarly, notice how this autonomy only exists in the *link*, the dialogue of contours.

In these works, freedom exists solely due to this contact, this exchange that is constantly modifying the nature of the figures. If each shape has its own unity, this is merely the starting point for a modification which, in otherness, keeps handing out a new deal of cards. Each rekindles the breeding principle that gives rise to the paintings. This does not mean that a preconceived whole is made manifest, but rather that the motion triggered by the painting brings about an equilibrium point so that the real may be attained. These paintings set up a theater of plurality, of mobility, making up a territory marked by crossbreeding between “one another”, strangeness of “one to another”, recognition of “one by another” - in other words, the story of a slow dance, unfolding in space.

Not the space of an object, but rather that which surrounds us, goes through us. The dissemination of painted records in architecture, the photos that transform reality and instill it with new life, the walldrawings that question the order of a show space for the sake of spatial reconstruction – these propositions shed light, in Gilgian Gelzer’s work, on ideas of subject matter and its relationship with the organic.

Gilgian Gelzer lays a living shape on a surface, but the only reason this shape is recognized as such, is due to the relationship created by another bordering or encircling shape. It is this “affinity” that is essential, a source for those to come. It is an intermediary that constructs the painting as a whole, a covering-up made of interpenetration, transparency, and border parasitizing. His process reveals his state of mind: opting for the unstable, warranting the intense and imponderable nature of the representations. Through this string of “coincidences”, enacted by colors and supple forms, Gilgian Gelzer attempts to imbue matter with life. What is he representing, if not the continuous activity of body and mind? A way of painting the awakening of consciousness and the senses. In these paintings, figures question themselves and are joined, marked by curiosity. They are drawn to each other, they are repulsed, they mingle and thus bring about the work. The shapes open unto each other. One color lights up another: in yellow, in provocative green, or the opposite, in tender fleshly rose.

Shapes are echoed throughout the painting, and this ensemble interaction modifies how we relate to the figures. Those that appear utterly abstract are shifted, take on body. We are on the verge of naming them, identifying a chunk of reality. As with certain New York abstract painters, Thomas Nozkowski or David Reed, we’re at the edge of figuration. As a result of this abstraction, we experience the probability of the figures, which, however, have no place in our lexis. Thus, they are replaced, just like Klebnikov’s “Zaoum” words, in our field of learning, and blend with the imaginary domain of our impulses, or into the workings of our reference systems.

Gilgian Gelzer makes us halt at that point, as if the vital signifiers were unable to serve as objectified representations, but were instead forced to remain principles of motion towards infinite potentialities of incarnations and relations. This position defines his painting. He presents it, represents it, sets it in motion. His work is abstract, and yet keeps flirting with recognition and image. It thereby proves its “active” principle, by calling upon each person’s memory, which acts as “cicerone” for reality assumptions.

However, memory is not our sole guide, for beyond recollection, it is desire that sweeps us from shape to shape, that intertwines the shapes in order to constitute the real. This desire is constantly present; it is partner to awareness. It stands out, whatever the rigors of composition, particularly in the drawings where it takes over the environment, in a frantic and free chase.

It is a spur, a vibrio. Its lines intersect, criss-cross. It bursts into startling circuits, and we are left stunned to have followed these termless paths. It is a choreography that generates a motley of signs and characters – beckoning each other, drooping, upright, or in flight. The sexual is present in Gilgian Gelzer’s drawings; it is jarring, joyous, often funny, and hints at legends and comic-strip blurbs, whose fiction is the saga of bodies.

Passion takes hold of matter. In one motif, we see a scene portrayal, we stare at a pattern, and then are plunged into a world of organs that belong to these very scenes and patterns, though inverted. We become strange travellers, with shifting scales and sizes, sliding outwards and inwards, speeding recklessly, as if in a science fiction movie. Gilgian Gelzer slashes and pierces space, and it engulfs us. Roaming in a network of strokes, we have lost our bearings, like Jonah inside the whale, until we grab a clump of lines that plucks us from the substance we’re submerged in. The surfaces are inverted, matter is turned inside out like a glove. Space is in our hand or swoops down on us from who knows where, swept by waves and flux. As we encounter strange creatures, we slip between solid and liquid. Coupling happens here, as well as birth, steering to the center of bodies, sexed and androgynous, through real or fantasized representations. Now that we’ve become “graphiconauts”, we delight in drawing’s virtual prowess. We open and close our eyes. Inside ourselves, beyond ourselves: a molecule fiction is unfolding from huge to tiny. From eruption to flatness, from deep groove to light trails, we are lover-players exploring substance, betting against functional spaces – those of architecture or of the page – for another space conceived by this navigation whose words are speed, void, transparency. This space is given ground by drawing whose founding experience involves freedom. An experience similar to that of William Burroughs or Valere Novarina regarding words they grab from all “ends”, creating an image, undoing it, forgetting it so that the body of language is made to gleam, so that language maintains the zest of forces that have turned into shapes. This shackling, this irony, these principles of capillarity and upheaval,

can all be seen in Gilgian Gelzer's photos. They are *œuvres* as well as notepads. The workings of his eye can thus be interpreted, here and there, as well as the scenes he selects in order to come up with a pictorial territory. Some of these photos, devoted to architecture, to cities, highlight spaces that are threatened by chaos or disorder – fuzzy spaces – not in order to express their tragic nature, but to underline their fertility. Counterpoint, contradictions, connections. They are places where, for the gaze, all remains possible. Ambiguous misfits, they are oddly preserved by that which threatens them. Such is the huge building by the sea, built orthogonally, distorted and ravaged by time, which has transformed it into an animal presence; a flat surface – a smooth street – is undercut by the fragmented surfaces of a work site. Two lines, two worlds, collide in unevenness. These images interconnect signs of diversity and plurality of worlds. They designate interstitial zones and furthermore, passageways, areas of metamorphosis. The eye moves back and forth and thus transmutes the space between motifs in the foreground, and those etched in the background, into the perspective.

Gilgian Gelzer tracks down "intervals" that serve as questions, as openings for the spectator. All the gaze can claim is the space between one object and another; a gap, which is what these shots are really about. Out of this gap, this route, Gilgian Gelzer brings about a "real" that is more real than the images he links. It is the source and basis of his world vision. Oddly enough, the hiatus is constantly fueling his vision with life and complexity. Far from hammering his postulate, he envisions all possible aspects (philosophical, sexual, architectural) without succumbing to demonstration or explanation. Every day, through painting, drawing and photography, he seeks out means of experimentation. I believe that for Gilgian Gelzer, every moment belongs to this experiment, which he undertakes without ever knowing how the sentence will begin or end. Driven by awareness and desire, his work "ventures out to encounter".