

EXHIBITIONS

Gerald Petit "Fondling" at Triple V, Paris

Share

For a long time, Gerald Petit used to define himself as a painter and a photographer, nourishing one practice with the other. The democratization of photography and its widespread development into a variety of mobile forms has led to intimate moments being shared in the blink of an eye. Confronted by this reality, the artist has brought into question his photographic practice, shifting his artistic output more towards painting, which he uses as a counterpoint to the photographic image.

From the outset, the photographic medium transformed a colorful, three-dimensional reality into a black and white picture. Gerald Petit's latest paintings move in the opposite direction; successive layers of overlapping colors cancel each other out, resulting in a visual impression of blackness. In the exhibition, the larger paintings evoke black and white photography and thus its indexical nature, yet they are the result of superimposed layers of color that produce imaginary landscapes or skies. In this process, painting «absorbs» photography, not as an index, but in a chemical sense. Here, the paintings become black and white through color, whereas photography used to produce black and white from the color spectrum. Painting becomes the opposite of the chemical process of photography. Both reveal, photographically, forms and shapes; every layer of painting acting as a developer of the previous layer: a process similar to photography. The result is a series of imaginary skies or landscapes, composed – but not copied –, and different painted scenes, cropped or incomplete, where the subject is not immediately discernible, but has to be sought after.

Each painting seems to avoid directly addressing the onlooker; these intimate, sketched out scenes seem to resist being shared. Due to the dark background and the tightly-cropped framing of the pictures, enigmatic situations unfold: limbs without bodies, hands holding objects that have almost entirely disappeared. Due to this fragmentation, the image becomes abstract, mute and does away with any narrative thread. The paintings require an effort from the spectator's imagination in order to reconstruct their meaning; they stand as an open invitation to a visual and tactile experience. The canvases offer themselves up without any key to their understanding. «Examining», «caressing the sensational eye», become a necessary pre-condition in grasping their meaning.



1 2 3 4 5 6

Gerald Petit "Fondling" at Triple V, Paris, 2017
Courtesy: Triple V, Paris