

LA TERRE EST BLEUE COMME UNE ORANGE

Soufiane Ababri, Pierre Ardouvin, Pauline Bazignan,
Matthew Brandt, Jim Isermann, Dan Levenson, Maude Maris,
Golnaz Payani, Christine Safa, Marnie Weber, Brian Wills, Guy Yanai

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Praz-Delavallade wanted to end 2020 on a more hopeful note with a group exhibition that invokes colour in all its forms and whose guest artists feel and see the world so keenly that colour is empowered. Although the theme is apparently simple, when you set out to address this subject you are confronted with the ambiguous nature of the very notion of colour. Colour provides information that helps us understand the world all around us and at the same time “colours” our experience of it. In other words, colour is informative and yet it provides a subjective experience and therein lies the complexity of the question.

The first thought that comes to mind is that perception of colour is influenced by the filter that each individual applies to what they see, and that colour is therefore a very personal matter. After all, we don't all perceive colour in the same way – an observation that is not just limited to colour blind people. Throughout the history of philosophy, from Aristotle and Descartes to the philosophers of the Enlightenment, colour has always been at the centre of reflections on art. The resulting consensus established a marked difference between an object's main attributes (its intrinsic properties) and its secondary and purely subjective qualities, which include colour. It is nevertheless possible to move beyond this opposition between objective and subjective colour, according to which the human eye perceives colour at the moment when one's gaze encounters an object. “Colour is a world in its own right [...] because it possesses depth, vibration and radiance, a rhythm and a way of addressing our emotions, and because it communicates with other means of perception, it is a property that is always whole”.¹

Throughout the history of contemporary art, colour has been an adventure which, from Malevich's white square to Rothko's fields of solid colour and from Shigeru Ban's white roof design for Centre Pompidou Metz to Pierre Soulages going “beyond black” with his outrenoir, not forgetting International Klein Blue, has played a part in establishing artists' identities. And today is no exception. “This insatiable thirst for colour is a basic need, colour is a vital necessity, a raw material that is just as indispensable to life itself as water and fire”, Fernand Léger declared. Colour is used to project subjectivity and thereby give rise to an emotional reaction in the viewer, however in so doing it tends to deform reality. Each and every one of us has to find our own truth, one that will enable us to truly see in technicolour – after all, as Paul Eluard² liked to remind his contemporaries: “The earth is blue like an orange”.

René-Julien Praz

PRAZ-DELAVALLADE PARIS
5, rue des Haudriettes F-75003 Paris
tél. +33 (0)1 45 86 20 00
info@praz-delavallade.com
www.praz-delavallade.com

PRAZ-DELAVALLADE LOS ANGELES
6150 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles CA 90048
+1 (323) 917 5044
losangeles@praz-delavallade.com

1. Claude Romano, *De la couleur*, 2010.