

Galerie Dukan

Kimiko Yoshida

RorschachYoshida

Carte blanche for Jean-Alexis Pougatch

Galerie Dukan, Saint Ouen

February 4 - March 6, 2017

Opening: February 4, 2017 / 2-6pm



RorschachYoshida XXVII (Pallas I), 2016
Phosphorescent paint, glitter and acrylic on long-life pigmented print on matt canvas, 140 x 140 cm, Courtesy Galerie Dukan



Self-Portrait, 2010
C-print mounted on aluminium and plexiglas, 120 x 120 cm, Ed. 2/10
Courtesy Galerie Dukan

From Saturday, February 4 to Monday, March 6, 2017, the Dukan Gallery gives carte blanche to Jean-Alexis Pougatch offering the the first exhibition of paintings by photographer Kimiko Yoshida (1963, Tokyo).

Since 2001 Kimiko Yoshida's self-portraits have adhered to an unvarying conceptual protocol: always the same subject (herself), the same point of view (frontal), the same lighting (indirect), the same chromatic principle (the subject is painted the same colour as the ground) and the same format (square). Thus the same figure is repeated, but never identically: the more it is repeated, the more it differs. The more it is the same, the more it changes.

No Photoshop, no retouching: painting, maquillage and straightforward photography.

Kimiko Yoshida is seeking an image that tries to ponder *in images* the very preconditions of representation; an image conceived out of the necessity to ponder one's own presuppositions. The conceptual protocol governing these images, together with their principle of repetition and their rationale of *abstraction*, show that, for Yoshida, the self-portrait is a consideration not of oneself, but of the representation of oneself. A consideration of the conditions that make representation possible. And thus of cut-off and separation, of division and cleavage. Of representation and meaning, representation and disappearance, representation and absence. Plus that impetus towards subtraction so characteristic of her oeuvre.

In the wake of Duchamp and Warhol, the conceptual lure of the free, baroque variations of the Rorschach inkblot emerged in the Japanese photographer's work when she became aware that this "autopoietic" output that triggers and defines its own transformation allowed her to make a connection between photography and painting by extending photography through painterly means. Above all, though, in daring to paint on her own photographic self-portraits – near-monochromes printed on canvas and titled by antiphrasis *Paintings* – she is setting out *to paint painting*. In Rorschach blots she finds grounds for the confirmation and development of her thinking about what it is that makes representation possible. This highlights the ambition that underpins her explorations.

The *YoshidaRorschachs* play on the dissonance between what the image shows and what the eye wants to see. In spite of this dizzying mass of blots and their added paint, in spite of these textural adjuncts and excesses of colour, despite this *something extra* that supplements the image, there remains the impossible that defies and will continue to defy representation. The impossible is there and no representation can counter it. This impossible gouges out a hole in the heart of the image that renders our enjoyment of it incomplete: the paint added to the image marks out the rim of this yawning cavity which alienates representation and projects its essence out into the beyond.

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Marie-Antoinette Reheaded as a Geisha (Wengmuller, 1770, Musée de Sèvres). Self-portrait, 2009
Laminated polyester resin, matt fluorescent paint, UV coating
91 x 66 x 43 cm, Ed. 3/8, Courtesy Galerie Dukan

The *YoshidaRorschachs* thus pave the way for an extension of the picture beyond itself, for a boundary-breaking opening-out of painting and a glimpse of an infinite reaching beyond what painting represents.

In these compositions, now bare of any hierarchical ordering of form, motif or figure in the colour space making up the picture surface, the artist's face tends to disappear directly into the creases of the paint, fade into the plane of the motif, dematerialise in the abstractness of a run, vanish into the rugged surface of the blot. In proceeding thus the artist is not only pursuing her investigations into the disappearance of oneself and the fading-away of the figure; she is also opening up her art to a state beyond representation, to a "formless form" that is the invisible heart of the image, the infinite, nameless heart of every image.

The image, which itself is only the outward appearance of what has disappeared, performs a destructive act whose result closely resembles death: it replaces the living being with a corpse that looks like it – such is the core point. "My art has always engaged with disappearance; I've always wanted to disappear into my images. My *Rorschachs* are images of disappearance in which the figure's disappearance gives the work its meaning. Lack and loss take shape in images in which the figure of the body is on the verge of fading away, of disappearing splendidly by fading into the colour."

In the *YoshidaRorschachs* the disappearance of the figure takes on a kind of sovereign nonchalance: the picture makes visible just how much the invisible within the visible remains visible. The artist has made a pact with the reversed negative, voicing her determination to advance without pathos towards her own disappearance as figure: "What is represented disappears, is not me, is another; so that when 'I' represent myself I have to disappear, because I am not the person I am showing."

YoshidaRorschach portrays the battle against darkness and silence as the keepers of that which eludes our gaze, that which takes refuge behind the image. Bringing an image to the "unfigurable" – the unfigurable as nameless, that is – in a series of blots and portraits, each work represents what is invisible in a figure, its immateriality, before figuring itself as a figure of disappearance. *YoshidaRorschach* arises out of this point of unfigurability. The artist puts a question: "Can painting show what makes the image within it without revealing what is missing as image within it? How does the image make itself image within the image?"

Thus Kimiko Yoshida addresses art as a starting-out back towards inherent lack, a starting-out towards representation of the impossible in which the image is in danger of disappearing. Her *Rorschachs* are the language in which disappearance finds expression and in which this very disappearance endlessly appears. This suspense in disappearance, this lack in the figure, is now all that is offered to the eye. Here we must acknowledge the fundamental reversal effected by the *YoshidaRorschachs* on the upended scale of the law of desire: turning loss into jubilation, the unknown into a revelation, absence into fascination, disappearance into a game, and fading into an illumination. An exhilarating reversal that makes lack within the image the core of the urge to see.

Jean-Michel Ribettes