

February 16th  
March 30th 2019Opening  
Saturday 16 February 2019  
From 11 am to 9 pm

# Ernest T. Felice Varini Beat Zoderer

## Peinture Hard

If it were not already the title of an article obliterated (and consequently rendered forever unreadable) by Ernest T. using a flat tint in red, the expression “Peinture Hard” would seem to have been coined to describe this coming together of Ernest T., Felice Varini and Beat Zoderer, in that their oeuvres, whilst situated within the confines of painting, find themselves on its more obdurate and extreme fringes, defying the spirit of seriousness that embraces painting and rebuffing the bourgeois temptations of the canvas. Ernest T., Felice Varini and Beat Zoderer as the bad boys of painting? It doesn't sound quite so odd when we see how their love/hate relationship with painting is expressed through irony and distance in the same way that stars of hard rock might howl their love of the music through aggressive and provocative riffs.

Canvases, frames and brushes have left the building, while the old refrains of minimalism and geometric abstraction have also been relegated. These three artists cultivate the same mistrust of painting and prefer to take the more oblique routes through the fields of color and shape. Yet the exhibition “Peinture Hard” is by no means devoid of pictorial and plastic effects, on the contrary they are present throughout. Instants of liberty are torn from constraints and dogmatism; the exhibition lends pride of place to accidents, playfulness and surprise. The oeuvres seduce the spectator with graphic events, capturing our gaze and our understanding with clever witticisms.

Ernest T. glosses over the daily news with approximately applied blocks of color, following rules concocted by his imagination. At the artist's discretion, an article from *Le Monde* newspaper, headlined with Picasso's signature (dated two days after the artist's death), is painted over or canvasses reproduced in its columns are transformed into monochromes. Felice Varini unveils a sculpture, a strange Möbius strip that alternates between two and three dimensionality depending on the angle of view. Further ambivalence can be observed in Beat Zoderer's oeuvres with the use of a double trigger mechanism. From a distance they give the impression of bold exercises in colorful geometry, but as one approaches, the artists hand, his technical mastery and painstaking assemblies are revealed: the staples joining the strips of foam, the perforations in the sheet of folded metal, revealing its reverse and the pleasant contrast in pink and yellow. Seen from a formal point of view, the three artists' practice is one of surface and compartmentalized painting, yet this common methodology stems from differing intentions: Ernest T.'s oeuvre is ironically critical, Varini's is more optical whereas Zoderer's is dictated by chance. Their ideas on color also differ significantly from one another. Ernest T. delves into the Minimalist palette, Varini borrows his tones from the industrial color chart and Zoderer finds satisfaction in the original colors of his materials.

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In conclusion, the works on display in the "Peinture Hard" exhibition demolish the prejudices attached to concrete and abstract painting, in particular the reproach of purely intellectual or formal painting. They are full of life and are both light but existential in nature; yet they never lie.

(Translation : Chris Atkinson)