

## *Chromatic Archipelagos and Collages*

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It may seem unusual how one stage or pictorial cycle after another is reached, while knowing that plots, obsessions, imaginaries, languages, tend to communicate in a much more submerged way than on the surface. The connecting threads are semi-hidden, and this partly explains how the veins or master lines of any work or trajectory are more evident in the poetics, in something more general (of attitude, position, signs, signals) than in the evidence at first glance.

In a painting such as Annette Skarbek's, who from the very beginning has been able to listen to *the voice of the voices* that are the colors, the chromatic power is an axis and regulating matrix. Then, with other phases or interests, it becomes stimulating to observe the landing to contemporary works so concentrated and synthetic and at the same time so dispersed and choreographic. A pictorial ballet of motifs that is like a "canvas of canvases", chromatic archipelagos that live of a refined synthesis. Skarbek's work is almost of oriental accessibility in its collage format, derived from real patchworks made with advertising, with commercial iconography, with second-generation images. From these, the artist extracts accents, zones, chords, parts (some of them different from the starting parts of his painting), reaching a state of unparalleled aesthetic asceticism, in which the viewer feels to be looking at a painting *in extremis*, on the threshold of its language.

It is a space in which the parts speak to each other in their *ars combinatoria* in a state of suspension, with the blank of the canvas speaking aloud. This dialogue with emptiness is made precisely to embrace the fragmentation, the suspension of this painting. It is concentrated in areas, cells of color, zones of tonal richness which function as compositions in a fragile and firm balance. It resonates Calder's *Mobiles*, which here can be recalled as an aesthetic reference in a subtle elective affinity, like a puff of breath. Each canvas, in fact, presents a constellation of abstract gestures, forms and colors, in a play of equidistance and visual equation. A formulation that underlies the idea of mosaic, or rather of *collage*, which is so ingrained in the artist, as a multiplying vector, a conceptual idea -- as happens in Sue Williams' painting. However, in this work there is a greater constellation of visual motifs, even micro-figurations and also a certain eros, movement, explosiveness.

Annette Skarbek's painting is cellular, and therefore micro, even in a structural sense, as she lives by the orchestration of isolated paintings (cores) that can be seen from a distance as a choral composition and up close as stand-alone units (micro-paintings). It often features drawing lines conceived as the rest of a visual support, a spider web drawn as a starting point that is increasingly

seen up close. It is a kind of half-hidden architecture that looks more like organicity: cells of color in activation developing as *disiecta membra*.

It is also a painting of accents, of subdued alchemy, of blobs emerging from a *pathos* which is explicitly dismembered and frayed but at the same time that sustains itself as an achievement, a relationship despite the inscribed silences, the voids in communion (here, we read the background work as a white layer, open, watchful: its white).

The warp and weft are given by the alienation of this structure in suspension -- on the drawn tightrope -- and its value is reflected in points-dialogues of color as emancipated appearances as fragments to their hidden magnet (underlying as hidden totality). As of many things, the viewer is given to see only a part of it. At stake is the balance of the pictorial field of this kaleidoscopic series, which presents itself as a situation of experience in space. The law of gravity is guessed by the foreshortenings represented, the result of a drift of totally atomized collages, saturated to the point of exploding in their visuality, and from which the artist will choose only dots-atoms-cells to formulate his aesthetic discourse.