

CAMPOLI PRESTI

PRESS RELEASE

Jean Degottex, Liz Deschenes, Ryuji Tanaka
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In an interview by Dominique Paini from 1981, Jean Degottex talks about the influence that Ozu's cinema has had on his work, an influence both conceptual, through their affinities with zen culture, and gestural, through the action of erasing. "Obliteration, effacement... we erase to reveal what is dramatically hidden by a supposed certainty. How do we stimulate the observation of a material, the canvas, if it's not by exposing it?"

Through the exploration of the interaction between planning and accident, the works of Jean Degottex, Liz Deschenes, and Ryuji Tanaka reveal the properties of their artistic medium in a continuous set of operations that engage with their immediate environment. Contemplative yet markedly analytical, the works witness the historical shift that gave rise to process-oriented practices, making them a contingent effect of its material and physical situation.

Highly influenced by Japanese art and Zen philosophy, Degottex experimented various techniques, progressively going, from gesture to sign to writing to the line. Gradually leaving the brush behind, the right line became central in the structure of his late paintings, either parallel, diagonal, or crossed. He adopted craft techniques, such as the use of pins, screwdrivers, sand, as well as different types of glue, embracing accidents and mistakes as part of the process. In his *Lignes-report* from 1997 (in English transfer, or delay) a visible main fold crosses the plane horizontally. A screwdriver was used to draw parallel lines while the canvas was still wet, leaving the uneven lines visible when unfolded. Degottex traces on the back of the canvas what he intends to be revealed on the front: reliefs, stratification or the infiltration of black paint on the opposite side. A central rectangular section was covered expansively with glue, which repelled the paint, varying the intensity and texture of the black. In his *Report-noir* from 1977, the division of the plane is re-stitched and seen from its reverse side. In his *Traces Grilles Collor II* from 1984, diagonal lines carefully drawn with nails subtly retract from the canvas after being marked with glue. Degottex's works are based on the succession and recurrence of phenomena, in a continuous process in which the traces remain visible: nothing before, nothing after, everything in the making, as he often stated.

In the work of Liz Deschenes, photographic processes are pared down to their barest essence. By using the most essential photographic elements – paper, light, and chemicals – she detaches photography from its status as a document and explores its potential as an object closely related to the architecture that surrounds it. In her photograms, Deschenes exposes the dim light of the night sky directly onto photographic paper that is later washed in silver toner. Her installation at Campoli Presti comprises of two groups of elongated photograms, one of them installed at regular intervals perpendicularly from the wall. Sharing the three-dimensional space with the viewer, the works create an effect of continuous movement. The minimal approach is yet confronted with the physical signs of its process of production. Traces of the atmosphere and of the hand application of the toner itself remain visible on the surface, while the photogram continues to develop and change gradually in hue. In her work, gesture does not have an expressive function. Instead, it confronts the idea of photography as a fixed surface by revealing its response to time.

Bypassing the norms of American and European painting, Ruyi Tanaka built a singular body of work that puts the material and the transcendental into tension. The artist formed part of two avant-garde groups that are synonymous with post-war Japanese art: the Pan-real Art Association and Gutai Art Association. Working on wooden panels, Tanaka went through a period of intense productivity at the beginning of the 1960s. In *Untitled*, 1962, he presents the aesthetic that had become central to his practice, where applications of light pigment sit at the nucleus of darkly painted planes. The artist is known for adding non-painterly materials, like pebbles, ground glass and glue to his pigment. The color has been mixed with excessive medium and left to drip, allowing an undetermined, active effect to invade the painting. Thus Tanaka reinterpreted Western abstraction, a sign of control, with the acceptance of natural materials and their behavior as they are. After a long period of combining different hues of black, in the 80s and 90s the artist introduced a luminous and ethereal quality through the use of color. *San '78*, 1978 is thinly coated with natural mineral pigments other elements are added to achieve transparency, in an attempt to capture, as he stated, the "soft and hard aspects within nature".

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SELECTED MUSEUM AND PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Jean Degottex (1918 - 1988)

The Solomon Guggenheim Museum, New York
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
Museum of Modern Art of Paris, France
Grenoble Museum of Painting and Sculpture, France
Museum Cantini, Marseille
Mac Val de Vitry-sur-Seine, France
Maeght Foundation, France
Museum of Evreux, France
Museum of Dunkerque, France
Regional Fund for Contemporary Art of Bretagne, France
Regional Fund for Contemporary Art of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France
Regional Fund for Contemporary Art of Languedoc-Roussillon, France
Regional Fund for Contemporary Art of Haute Normandie, France
Museum of Dijon, France
Renault Art Collection, France
National Fund for Contemporary Art of Paris, France
Museum of Toulon, France
Royal Museums of Belgium, Brussels
Liège Museum of Fine Arts, Belgium
Peter Stuyvesant Collection, Amsterdam
Museum of Art and History, Geneva
Malmö Konsthall, Sweden
The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, USA
20th Century Museum, Vienna
Bezalel National Museum, Jerusalem
Gutai Pinacoteque, Osaka
The Ohara Museum of Art, Tokyo

Liz Deschenes (b. 1966)

Le Centre Pompidou, Paris
MoMA – The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota
The Art Institute of Chicago, USA
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C
Corcoran Museum of Art, Washington D.C.
CCS Bard Hessel Museum, Annandale-on-Hudson
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco

Ryuji Tanaka (1927 - 2014)

Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe
The Miyagi Museum of Art, Dendai
Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, Ashiya
Osaka City Museum of Modern Art, Japan
Hyogo Prefectural Private School Hall, Kobe
KONAN Gakuen, Ashiya
Kobe Municipal Motoyama Junior High School, Japan
Sugimoto Nursery and Kindergarten, Kishiwada
Ninomiya Shrine, Kobe
Nofukuji Temple, Kobe