MOUSSE

Heike-Karin Föll “over-painting” at Weiss Falk Zurich

23.06.2023 READING TIME 3′ SHARE



Heike-Karin Föll reminds us that painting is, first of all, an art of making moves. Of moving between decision and accident. Between adding and subtracting. Fast and slow, stupid and smart moves. Stopping, too, as a move. If we can't help thinking of the painter as the energetic source or cause of every work she signs, we're also reminded, meanwhile, that painting's motor is at all times swept up in her own moves. At best, she's their catalyst. Or more like a mediator, or point of inflection. Because what's put into motion, in this practice, are not only materials and colors but the painter herself.

Colorful, liquid bodies emerging and forming in the midst of their own movements: painting and painter. In Föll's practice, painting is a body that never stops materializing before our eyes.

A series of very small canvases approaches the reduced formats of portable tablets and mobile phones. By bringing painting within range of such devices, Föll puts painting into closer dialogue with the strange and diabolical temporality of the digital interface. Where does

time go here? If painting is an art of making moves, it's also a kind of attention to how material moves are always folded into lived, bodily time. Attention to the fact that paintings are bodies made of living time. The tiny canvas is like an interface that approaches the thickness and density of a thing in the world, built of many encrusted layers and multiple, accumulating times. But unlike the interface, which only disappears time, here painting gives time its very own body. A resistant, plastic body. Föll's small, tough canvases are thick with the time of their own making, making their own emergence vivid and real. The marks and moves that build up these works are systematic when they want to be. And then sometimes go against themselves, also systematically. One layer obliterates another, and it's obliteration itself that becomes vivid, joyful and refreshing in these canvases.

The larger works are done *alla prima*, which involves wet-on-wet painting, an art of first strikes and heightened reflexes. Here painting

accelerates. Scrawled passages of color veer and wander between articulation and distraction. Sometimes we're in the realm of almost-writing. In many works, Föll activates the color white in a way that recalls certain nervously luminous paintings by Berthe Morisot . . . a chaotic white that thickens the space of a moment like paste. Some compositions are deliberately floral and garden-like: organized wildness and then wild order. Other works are more immediate and brutalist in their attack, and seem to channel the graffiti-like energy of Fautrier, Twombly, Jorn.

The name Heike-Karin Föll is stamped onto some canvases: the author as brand as signature as mark among other types of marks, involving itself in this joyful system of move-making and obliteration. Like a motor, painting is a machine made of motion. At a certain point, we lose the distinction between motor and motion. Composition becomes an effect of this. Color is its speed.

—John Kelsey