

Sven-Ole Frahm Christoph Wedding

Invisible Black

September 8-29, 2007

Sven-Ole Frahm, born in 1972 and Christoph Wedding, born in 1967 are two much talked-about representatives of new abstract painting in Germany, and more particularly Düsseldorf. The Jean-Luc & Takako Richard gallery is showing Sven-Ole Frahm's work for the first time in France, whereas this is the third time pictures by Christoph Wedding have been exhibited in the gallery.

This new form of abstraction does not originate in elevation to transcendence and sublimation, but in a reworking of the pictorial principle of abstract painting, in "drawing a line that travels far, that rushes forward or recedes, that vanishes and cuts short, that breaks up there, that breaks abruptly".

These two artists successfully combine two esthetic forms in a way few artists have attempted. The first is a fluid form made up of curves that follow an apparently spontaneous order of the kind found in nature; the other is a geometric form consisting of horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines that is clearly interventionist. These two artists have each found different ways of combining these two forms in their works.

Sven Ole-Frahm, pours a very liquid acrylic paint on a canvas laid on the ground. The paint spreads according to the uneven surface of the ground and aided by the artist who guides the flow of expanding stain. The resulting two-colored painting could stand on its own as a work of art – the fluidity of the shapes and the interplay of color and empty space is satisfying as it is. To bring in the second form Sven-Ole Frahm destroys the first canvas. He cuts it up into geometric sections, either squares and rectangles, or triangles and lozenges. Then, as though using the pieces of a puzzle making up a final picture which he has already planned, he creates a second canvas by sowing together the pieces in a different arrangement. In this way he adds a geometric structure to the curving runs of the first canvas, which now end abruptly at the borders of each section of canvas. This process of destruction-creation is akin to that advocated by the great economist Joseph Schumpeter.

On a plain, or sometimes a graded background, Christoph Wedding draws unwavering curved lines in a thin, slightly transparent layer. These lines may all flow in the same direction, rather like blades of grass blowing in the wind. The lines may also be more organic curves and circles that intermingle, or masses of superimposed brushstrokes made with thicker paint that form a "shapeless" magma. This esthetic form is counterbalanced, like Sven-Ole Frahm's works, the use of the straight line of the edge of the frame which cuts short the curving brushstrokes, or by the use of broad curved brushstrokes that end abruptly on a straight line, leaving the curve ending in a sharp point. These curves that end abruptly have literally disappeared, since they were created with a gesture and a line that continued onto another support which has been removed. One could say that Christoph Wedding works by removal.

Sven-Ole Frahm and Christoph Wedding have returned to some fundamental principles of abstract painting in order to better reinvent it.

Sven-Ole Frahm took part in the exhibition *Compilation III* at the Kunsthalle in Düsseldorf in 2007 and was awarded the *60th Bergischer Prize for Art in 2006* at Solingen Art Museum. He had previously won the *Villa Romana Prize* in Florence in 2003. His work has been exhibited in galleries in Düsseldorf, Berlin, Amsterdam and now Paris.

Christoph Wedding has this year been awarded the Stiftungskunsts fonds grant. He had a one-man-show at the Konsortium in Düsseldorf in 2006. His works are shown regularly at Art Basel, Art Basel Miami, Frieze, Armory Show and Art Cologne.