

Vis-à-vis - Eames Fine Art - 5 may / 5 June 2022

Colour is the first thing to hit you, from all directions, when stepping into Chloé Bocquet's debut show with Eames Fine Art. It is almost dizzying in its array, in its variety and its harmonies. Chloé has spent the last two years working on her *Vis-à-Vis* series, mixing ink to produce ever subtler nuances of blue, green, pink, purple, red, orange. Each is unique, and the process has deepened her relationship with colour, sharpening her sense of it. In turn, having the opportunity to behold the result of all this work at once, our own sense of colour is sharpened. But there are shapes, too, simple forms that seem almost abstract and yet are immediately obvious when viewed in series. It is not only the colours that are unique; every composition is taken from the gable of a different building.

What at first may appear to be an exhaustive line-up of the different forms that gables can produce is, in reality, only a fraction of what any city-dweller will walk past in an average week. However, Chloé has not only passed by each and every one, but has also observed them, actively, has transplanted these blank, negative, ignored architectural spaces into the studio, and used them as a basis for her immense exploration of colour. The city, with its interminable streets, can be a place in which it is hard to feel at home. Through her acts of looking, Chloé's work quietly celebrates the individuality of the city's many facades, while at the same time, by using these found compositions, and simplifying them, gives a privilege to colour almost as if each piece were a portrait of its own particular hue.

There is, in this exhibition, an equally striking variety of artistic mediums. In her linocuts, Chloé turns her attention from the urban to the domestic, from colour to form. In pieces such as *La Chambre* and *10 AM* the limitations of working in monochrome require that she reduce her subjects down to their formal elements. There is a simplicity to these images that belies the consideration with which this is done and the confidence of her use of negative space (for example the depiction of a saucepan in the latter without a complete outline). It is in linocut that Chloé has produced her first ever landscapes. Looking to Félix Vallotton and his fin de siècle woodcuts for guidance, Chloé has refined the visual complexities of foliage, of the sun casting its light upon the Loire Valley, down to bold areas of black and white that nonetheless impress upon us the verdancy and resplendence of the original scene.

In addition to the main body of *Vis-à-Vis* monotypes, there is a smaller series of work produced in drypoint. The vigorous work of inscribing lines directly into the plate is evident in the extremely textural nature of the mark-making, and yet, despite the violence of these marks, the overall effect is somewhat spectral, providing a surprising counterpoint to the related monotypes.

It is a testament to Chloé's engagement with her practice that such a diverse range of work - which also includes pastels and two digital monotypes - holds together. The architectural, the industrial, the domestic - Chloé looks at each in turn and is able to break her subjects down to their essential forms. But it is her understanding of different mediums - linocut and drypoint, pastel and photography - of colour and of space, that means once she reassembles the pieces we are looking at something completely new and enchanting.

Luke Wallis, April 2022