

Primordial Nomadism – The *Shelter Painting* by Simon Laureyns

The Simon Laureyns's studio is wide open under a big porch in Ghent, Belgium. The artistic practice comes directly from the environment and from the nature in which it lives, allowing an active glance towards what's around it.

His work is born from a double activity, the preparation of the thought which precedes the action on camp; the two activities can be defined, one as an intellectual type identifiable as *intern*, the other, the one aimed to recover materials, *extern* because it assumes a will to research inside the urban landscape. Simon Laureyns sifts through the territory, locating and retrieving materials representative of the memory of our contemporary landscape.

As for the series *Memory Lane I*, where it was clear that Laureyns in front of an everyday object not usable anymore – and ready to be removed as for example a broken bicycle rack or a bench – was completing a withdrawal action from the original place to the relocation inside a new context, reevaluating and studying with artistic attention its transformation; also for the series *Shelter Painting* he creates a similar action, this time choosing the last nomadic element of the contemporary urbanised civilization: the used camping tent which the artist structures.

The series *Shelter painting*, exhibited for the first time at #fuocoapaesaggio2, wants to highlight the importance of the social organisation, dictated by now stereotyped rules which throughout the centuries had defined the individual and innate freedom of the human being.

The tent, the identificative element, it's the mobile house par excellence, was born from the necessity of the transfer of the nomadic communities. Typical of the non-settling populations that had to move from one place to another to look for food according to the season, this residence has then been substituted by new urban centres in evolution, when men had decided to stay for a long time in an area creating new social and civic rules.

With *Shelter painting*, the artist identifies the contraposition that man instinctively has with the social rules he has created himself, which made him sedentary, towards the need and the desire to reconquer a freedom he has rejected for himself.

The word *painting*, present in the title of the series, suggests the will of the Belgian to identify himself as a painter. Laureyns's *painting* comes from his predisposition at the observation, at the analysis and at the collection of the objects of the world which surround him and which auto-support and once they're structured, they can convert into paintings.

It's inside the titles where the concept of *artist-painter* is reiterate, starting from *Based painting*, made after the long period he had lived in Chile, where Laureyns acted directly on the canvas' support after he had prepared it, a series of passages where there's still the classical gesture of the painter and the brush is evident even if light and evanescent, and that's here that the artist starts his journey toward the annulment of his own sign, looking for what's around.

The theme of the annulment comes back with *Billboard painting*, where the back of a series of stratified billboards is structured to contest and to highlight how the conformalist advertising message can be bypassed and overstepped only changing the medium.

The brush disappears in *Pool painting* and in the series *Billboard painting* where bidimensional reused materials are structured to arrive at *Shelter painting*, where he makes another action deciding to portion an object born to be tridimensional once built.

Anti-strap stichings and closed zippers invade the stretched synthetic textile monochromes showing the time passing. Zippers becoming the symbol of a man in need of privacy and intimacy and at the same time of protection. Zippers showing a man in need of freedom and of union with the nature and its rythmes, but maybe, a man who hasn't been ready to leave behind the comfort of the modern world. Laureyns's tents show the passage of the time, the sun bleached the textile, the dirt set and little rips have been stiched as scars on the skin.

It's as if Simon Laureyns, deciding to section and to frame the textile, is the first to try, knowingly, to reconquer the initial freedom, as man tries to do when he decides to go bak to modern nomadism and to suspend social rules.

And it's in the title - of the second personal exhibition of Simon Laureyns at A+B Gallery- *Skyunny Dipping* where we can fully catch the meaning of the artist's action. The tent, born with the aim of protection and shelter, has always been a safe place where we can undress from any social disguise, space-shelter where we can return *primordial*. The tent, as an intimate place but also as a skin from which we can't strip, because it's the place of truth and unconditional freedom.

All the work of the Belgian artist is characterised by a reflection about opposition and contraposition of the society.

If inside the series *Pooltable3*, the artist centres the attention on how the rules of the game were dictated by rules about surfaces, structuring the pooltable's material, consumed by repeated action of the sliding stick; here we can prove that the series *Shelter painting* reflects the will of the man to have a sedentariety with precise social rules and an organisation, most of the times static, which precludes the original instincts of indipendence, freedom and truth.

Federica Scolari

Simon Laureyns was born in Ghent (Belgium, 1979) where he graduated in Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts of KASK.

Personal exhibitions:

2017

Six Million Ways to Die, A+B Gallery, Brescia, IT;

2015

Bellos Horizontes, LE CABANON/VOSSELARE PUT, Deinze, B; 2014 “Cover up the grey”, ROSSI CONTEMPORARY, Bruxelles, B.

Collective exhibition:

2018

ZERO, Group show with Daniel Buren and Renaud Regnery , Galerie Jérôme Pauchant, Parigi, FR

2017

Memories of an elephant, Group show with Tamina Amadyar, Pierre Knop and Mathias Malling Mortensen, Kunsthaus, Essen D

Silent, genius at work! duo show with Manor Grunewalld, GALERIE JEROME PAUCHANT, Paris, FR;

What about the color pink, do you like pink?, GEUKENS & DE VIL GALLERY, Knobbe, BE;

2016

(Idéale) Géographie, une introduction, curated by Oliver Kosta-Théfaine, NOIRE GALLERY, Torino, IT;

Slash, curated by Gabriele Tosi, A+B GALLERY, Brescia, IT;

Simon Laureyns invites Xavier Mary, GEUKENS & DE VIL GALLERY, Knobbe, BE;

2015

Even a Birch can be Real, curated by Gabriele Tosi, A+B GALLERY, Brescia, IT;

Aoteroa, Loods 12, WETTEREN, B. INCUBATE, Schowburg, Tilburg, N;

(Idéale) Géographie, LE MOULIN DU ROC (CAC), Niort, F;

Volumes, BERTHOLD POTT GALERIE, Cologne, G;

2014

Crox 479 Based Painting, CROXHAPOX, Ghent, B;

Neighbours Vol. 1, STUDIO MANOR GRUNWALD, Ghent, B;



The Young Ones, SKI, Ghent, B.