



"Energie", how music and art influence the life Christian Rattaz

↳ EXHIBITION: The title of ELA's next exposition, "Energie," is well chosen, for we only need to throw a quick glance at the works of Christian Rattaz to perceive movement and life in them.

Gusta van Dobbenburgh
Curator

Many of his colorful and gold covered pieces are "splashed" with dots of paint, reminiscent of polka dots, and with lines that are full of activity, making a work spiral into a point behind the image, creating depth. In reality they are not "thrown" onto the canvas, but carefully painted, sometimes by deliberately turning the brush, to give them "speed," like a tennis ball would be hit by a racket to give it extra spin. These "drops" (as he calls them) and elongated shapes do not only serve as points of energy on the canvas, but also represent fragments of Christian's memory. Upon closer look his paintings reveal more than the first impression would lead to believe. A hidden eye, a face, musical notes projected around an object. Here is someone at work who likes to play little tricks with the viewer, creating playfulness and surprise. Is it a coincidence, then, that the maker became known for his three dimensional work at a very young age? It isn't.

Christian Rattaz became his father's apprentice as a plasterer when he was still living at home, and was eager from the very beginning to explore new techniques and possibilities. As his talents and innate desire to create and to express himself could not sufficiently come out in the "métier" he began to look around elsewhere in Switzerland for other opportunities in order to further his expertise. After having finished his exam in "plastering" with a first prize in the canton of Vaud in 2002 he studied hot plaster techniques as well as "staff" (a plaster, based on natural fiber), in Ticino.

By the time imitation techniques for painting faux wood, marble, stone and metal had no secrets for him anymore, Switzerland had become too small for him and he



Coquillage © CHRISTIAN RATTAZ

went to Paris, with no connections or support, where he enrolled at the "Institut Supérieur de Peinture décorative de Paris." Without resting or taking time off he immersed himself with determination in the art of decorative painting, patina and "trompe l'oeil," a technique that fools the eye through optical illusion.

"When I am really involved in a project" he told me, "I work like a madman." And that paid off. The time in Paris became the shift in his approach from the more practical way of working to a more artistic one.

In his own words "it all began in 2006, when I felt the need to connect my two passions: music and painting, for to me these are complementary waves that influence us. Being interested in nature and feeling very much at home in it,

I observe it frequently and after a while I begin to develop ideas, while sounds inspire me."

As Christian so much loves to create depth in his work he sometimes mixes his pigments with various liquids, such as beer or oil. The result is a substance with a 3D effect. "Do you know what the difference is between pigments mixed with beer or white wine? Beer makes them sticky and wine makes them run."

Deep blue hues play an important role in his work, as does the color gold. The combination of the two makes for a regal look. His golden nautilus shell against a deep blue background is a shining example of that. We find the same combination in a landscape, depicting a village by a lake, set in a dark blue nightly universe. The shimmer of the lit windows appears to

be realized in gold as well. The use of different media, literally mixed, creates a lusciousness that they might not have had without them. Christian's dream is to live of his art work one day. For now, he continues to embellish canvases as well as arches, walls and ceilings, with lots of "Energie." ☺

Christian Rattaz,
"Energie"

February 22 - April 1

Artist's reception:

Thursday, February 25,
18h00 - 20h00

Location: EL buildings
Room ELA 010

Hours: 8h45 - 17h00

Information:

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