

## Jean-Marc Pouletaut, from surface to depth

**With varying density of pigments and contrasts, and following the principles of composition and overlaying, he plays with codes to better reveal the arbitrary. In 1988 at the Villa Arson in Nice, where he was introduced to research in contemporary art, he created the “hypertrophied canvas”.**

Working on the back of mosquito netting, Jean-Marc Pouletaut uses a foam roller to create colour gradations. *“The netting lets the paint spread randomly and leave traces in its infinitely small holes (...) Each color corresponds to a separate, monochromatic layer of paint.”* The netting’s grid-work allows him to order, class and let the evidence accumulate; a multitude of points, like the traces of an ongoing, unsolved investigation. These small coloured clues combine to form an expansive, astonishingly entangled whole. His delicate, fluid approach creates a vibrant mass of apertures and intervals; fine links, an outburst of contrasts revealing the poetry of reality. Slightly wavy effects disturb our vision, planes are flattened, space is inverted, the foreground recedes and vice versa. This work is about density, mass, opacity and transparency.

By superimposing colour palettes and light spectrum, the artist reveals how the visible disappears in an endless play of bright light and shadow that leads us to search for the gaps or re-examine the certainties of light. Basic colours mingle with their complements, creating disrupting and moving effects. The unpredictable fashion in which light is captured and colours are distributed creates a lively and continual balance, and the feeling of spatial depth and movement that we get through the effects of perspective and relief leads us to imagine that the given space extends further.

The hypertrophied canvas remains abstract by the formal nature of what it puts into play. The artist refutes any meaning or aesthetics which may be related it, and admits only the manipulation of its surface as a support. His research is a reflection on the question of the work itself, of the process through which it is created and the affirmation of its physical reality. His techniques and formal inventions explore the limits of plasticity and are critical invitations to re-evaluate the reading of past artwork.

*"I was privileged by the critical analysis - so dear to the Supports Surfaces group - of the work of art in general, as there was complete freedom of expression with respect to the surface and its support. This corresponds to the definition the conceptual artist Ad Reinhardt gave to his Black Square, where there is no top, bottom, left or right. We find this with Supports Surfaces, for example."*

Not only the object-painting is re-thought, but so is all its activity.

Jean-Marc Pouletaut became visually impaired in October 1998. He now uses his visual memory, and a third person helps him to follow lines and angles. He preserves his experience of space and of crossing volumes. Intention and intuition are balanced by harmonious inner logic, an authentic mechanism through which our emotions are triggered by what we see.

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