

Flirtation

This text is an afterword to the show *We Found Love in a Hopeless Place*. Initially, I was interested in flirting with “the contemporary image” - the superficial pleasingly correct image – a *hopeless place*, no doubt. The title of the show is also a title of a Rihanna hit song. I started out disapproving both Rihanna and modern painting, but as the ironic flirt turned into real emotions, I had to admit that I am truly interested in both subjects. I was won over by “the contemporary image”. I was attracted, charmed, bewitched. My rationale was converted into unsophisticated, unproblematic and well-favoured passion. I found love in a hopeless place. Is that bad? Should I not have given in?

These past years I have exploited the tools of painting in order to deal with dense cognitive content. I began to wonder if I have even been fair to my ancient and outdated medium. Where (and why) is painting today? In order to respectively pay my debts to the medium, I involved myself in the contemporary. It was sweet to give in; to *be* exploited and to be charmed by colour and form again. As superficial as this show might seem, I have not had this authentic feeling for painting since before art school when I first made a large abstract painting. While at the same claiming to have been dealing with the format of the medium, for me painting has also been a problematic tool for communicating something else than painting. In *We Found Love in a Hopeless Place* the content of consumerism can only be mediated if you as a viewer are willing to consume the paintings. In short, the patterns and compositions of the paintings in the show are conversions of Rihanna's wardrobe - a portrait of a commercialized, contemporary person - based on paparazzi pictures. The content of the show then lies in that deceptive logic of sweetish consumption - the charming (or manipulation, if you like). Only after this necessary intake you can conclude what type of sensitivity is appropriate for you in that moment; delight (you have carelessly enjoyed the flirt) or disgust (you feel plundered by the flirt). And no matter what line you stand in, the painting is still a charming painting. Do I accept the cult of the contemporary? I do not know. I am still bewitched. But in this final analysis I think my answer is: Yes I am. And I enjoy it.