

- Featured exhibition

The pictorial in all its incandescence and interiority

► Dual exhibition for Jeff Kowatch: the exuberant graphic portion at the La Forest Divonne, the tranquil, meditative part at Faider.

To date, Jeff Kowatch has bestowed on Brussels a marvellously attractive and gentle painting composed of chromatic haloes that are supple, irregular and dynamic, drawing the eye into a soft, floating and indeterminate universe. We settle in, feel good and lose ourselves. And that well-being soon becomes intimacy and interiority, conducive to entering into oneself. Into a peaceful, agreeable meditation that is at times even joyous, albeit with a certain reserve. This is not at all surprising, given that the artist is a Master Dharma Teacher of Zen. He draws us along on his mental journey. This painting, of an ever-dazzling technical perfection, rendered perfectly smooth thanks to the glazing technique that also creates a certain distance with the image, is once again displayed in a solo exhibition at the Galerie Faider. The entire show is ravishing, and will not come as a surprise to those who know his work. It is a confirmation of the gradual blurring away of all tangible reality, leaving nothing but vaguely circular shapes, in an agglomeration reminiscent of a constellation of elements of disparate origins whose sole identity lies in their attenuated, but dense colour. By a gradual erasure, this family of cells undergoes the effects of time, from whose grasp nothing can escape. And the artist, as a wizard, transforms it into a language of aspirational beauty. Admirable.

### **Expressive lyricism**

For the first time in Brussels, in a second solo exhibition, this one at the Galerie La Forest Divonne, Jeff Kowatch makes use of the lovely light of the space with an impressive series of large drawings/paintings. Recent works never before exhibited. They follow up on his oil pastels on paper. They are monumental, powerful works and their dense and sustained chromaticism are expressionist by virtue of their graphic, tonic and ardent vigour. They exude life and a feverish lyricism, the results of a new creative process. The artist works on a hard surface, prepared and coated in white Dibond aluminium. He has also changed tools, opting for oil paint sticks. The material is the master, and the colours gain in intensity. The line quivers, enriched by a slight relief that catches the light and produces vibrations. The line, in its circumvolutions, concentric circles, superimpositions and waves, is a continual, concentrated, obsessive current, a diffuse energy that electrifies something that does not quite resemble anything, so abstract is its form. And yet there is something Baroque in the air, an Arcimboldo under a cloak, a still life that awakens, an effusion of the vegetal or organic. No matter where we are, we are swept away, conquered by this nervous, dynamic and bright vitality. The artist draws us into a slightly mad sarabande, at the very heart of the matter, in an unparalleled world that beguiles us by its strength, generosity and abundance. It's great Mr Kowatch!

### **Double-sided**

Is the artist a sort of Janus, the mythical two-headed god? The two sides of a mountain, one peaceful in its green relief, the other coarser, more abrupt with its sharp rocks? Neither is given precedence, as these two forms constitute the two faces of a single work that reveals itself partly in a need for exteriority, and partly in interiority. The motifs, structures, compositions, chromatic sources, essential forms and the overall order are identical. The moments are different and the techniques are adapted accordingly. Simply masterful.

Claude Lorent

"The pastels of Jeff Kowatch reflect a joyful expansion of the colour, liberated in strokes of pure colour."

"With Jeff Kowatch, keeping the form is synonymous with purification."

**Michel Draguet, 2018**